

# Inspection of Merstham Park School

Taynton Drive, Redhill RH1 3PU

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Inspection dates: 18 and 19 October 2022

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Previous inspection grade Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

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

Leaders have created a school where learning and success are a top priority. They ignite pupils' passion for learning and are determined to make a difference to their life chances. Pupils enjoy their learning, embracing the many opportunities available. The values of being inclusive, collaborative, resilient, respectful and successful are evident in the ethos of the school.

Alongside this, leaders have created a culture where the well-being and safety of pupils are at the heart of the school's work. Bullying is not tolerated. Pupils behave well and respect each other. They are happy and proud of their school. One Year 11 pupil said that he was proud to be a member of the school throughout its first years. He added that the founding headteacher, who never saw the final school, would be proud of what the school has become.

Parents are overwhelmingly complimentary of the school, its leadership, the education and the way in which pupils' confidence and passion for learning are developed. As one parent said: 'My son absolutely loves Merstham Park. He is very happy and is thriving. I am hugely impressed by the passion and dedication of all the staff I have met. I couldn't wish for more and wouldn't hesitate to recommend Merstham Park.'

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

The curriculum is ambitious, broad and balanced. It includes extensive extra-curricular opportunities, enabling pupils to attend subject-specific classes or pursue a wider range of interests. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are included in the full curriculum offer. Their needs are appropriately identified early on. Across most subjects, leaders ensure that the curriculum is carefully considered and well sequenced. It is designed to build on previous learning and develop pupils' knowledge, skills and vocabulary over time. However, in some subjects, the curriculum is not as well sequenced. This means that, at times, pupils struggle to make links with their prior learning.

Teachers use their strong subject knowledge to present information clearly. They explain things well. Pupils with SEND receive the right support to help them learn alongside their peers. In subjects such as English, mathematics and art, teachers skilfully use assessment and retrieval practice to identify pupils' misunderstandings and check for common misconceptions. They use this information to carefully plan for future learning.

The importance of reading is seen as a priority. Across subjects, teachers ensure that opportunities for reading in class are maximised, placing suitable emphasis on key terminology that pupils should learn and remember. There are clear systems to support pupils who are not able to read fluently, and the interventions are having a noticeable impact on pupils' reading and learning.

Staff have high expectations for pupils' behaviour. Strong pastoral support balances rewards with sanctions and consequences that are known and understood by pupils. As a result, pupils listen and follow their teacher's instructions and are fully engaged in their learning.

Pupils receive appropriate and relevant careers information, advice and guidance from Years 7 to 11. This includes careers-focused learning every week, enrichment mornings and online videos from local business leaders who talk about their career journey. The school engages closely with local colleges and universities to raise pupils' aspirations and ambitions. Consequently, pupils are well informed about the next stage of their education.

The school promotes equality, diversity and opportunity. However, some teachers do not have the expertise to deliver the personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum effectively. This results in some pupils not recognising the importance of the subject or fully understanding fundamental British values or equality. Misconceptions are not always challenged, and factual debate and discussion are not always managed effectively to develop knowledge and understanding about important topics.

Staff are proud and enjoy working at the school and contribute fully to the vision that has been set by leaders. They appreciate that leaders are mindful of their well-being and workload. Governors fulfil their statutory duty. They work closely with leaders to provide effective challenge and support to bring about improvements in the provision.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils' safety and welfare are a high priority for the school and its community. Pupils recognise this and have confidence in the systems and education that support them to be safe. Leaders have developed systems to identify pupils at risk. The school has an experienced team of trained safeguarding officers to support pupils and access external agencies as needed. Staff know when and who to report to. Regular training keeps them up to date so they can identify any concerns. Leaders manage safer recruitment well. Members of the trust and local governors monitor this aspect of the school's work effectively.

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

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

- In some subjects, leaders have not made sure that the curriculum is sufficiently well sequenced. Pupils do not learn as well as they could in these subjects. Leaders should continue to develop the curriculum to help all pupils learn more and remember more and be able to explain their ideas clearly.

- The implementation of the PSHE curriculum is not as effective as it could be. Pupils do not fully understand the wider societal issues that can affect them and their community. Leaders should ensure that staff are well trained to deliver the programme as intended and have the confidence to challenge any misconceptions that arise.

## 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>	145898
<b>Local authority</b>	Surrey
<b>Inspection number</b>	10241579
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Free school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	522
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Lynne O'Reilly
<b>Headteacher</b>	Andy Ward (Head of School)
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.mersthamparkschool.org">www.mersthamparkschool.org</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- The school is part of GLF Schools, a multi-academy trust. It was founded in 2018 and moved into the new school buildings in September 2022.
- The school currently uses two alternative provisions, one of which is registered with Ofsted.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- 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.

- The inspection team met with the head of school, the executive headteacher, senior leaders, staff, pupils and those responsible for governance, including the chair of the trust.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, history, art and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors considered the views of members of staff who responded to the confidential staff survey and the 115 responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey, which included 110 free-text responses.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils to discuss their views about many different aspects of the school.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors viewed the school website and policies, met with safeguarding leaders, spoke to pupils and staff, scrutinised school records of the safeguarding checks on adults working in the school and spoke to governors.

### **Inspection team**

Julie Summerfield, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
James Rouse	Ofsted Inspector
Harry Kutty	Ofsted Inspector

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