

Inspection of an outstanding school: Moor House School & College

Mill Lane, Hurst Green, Oxted, Surrey RH8 9AQ

Inspection dates:

29 and 30 November 2022

Outcome

Moor House School & College continues to be an outstanding school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Moor House School and College are happy, confident and eager to learn. They fully appreciate how well they are helped to achieve their full potential. Highly skilled staff enable pupils to realise that they can overcome their barriers to learning. Pupils soon realise that success is available for them. They just have to work hard, which they really do. Pupils are encouraged to aim high. Their motivation to achieve their chosen careers propels them to do as well as possible in exams. Consequently, pupils leave school and college with meaningful accreditations and are exceptionally well prepared for their future lives.

Pupils behave extremely well. They are friendly, respectful and remarkably supportive of each other. The school and college are welcoming, studious environments in which pupils develop into self-assured young adults. As one parent told us, 'Our child's confidence, happiness and self-esteem have grown immeasurably and their progress towards academic qualifications has far surpassed any expectations we had on them joining the school.'

The impressive, collaborative, multidisciplinary approach ensures pupils make outstanding progress with their speech and language. Staff know and understand pupils exceptionally well. They are united in their desire to equip pupils to be as independent and successful as possible in adult life.

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

All staff have extremely high aspirations for pupils. Teachers, therapists and specialist teaching assistants work together remarkably well. They are knowledgeable and share their specific expertise across the staff team. As a result, pupils benefit from a wide range of helpful strategies and approaches, which are used consistently by staff. These enable staff to support pupils to learn successfully, despite their special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). For example, visual symbols help pupils to understand the meaning of

more complicated words, or how to form complex sentences correctly. Pupils also learn to use a wide range of useful assistive technologies.

Leaders have carefully crafted a unique curriculum which suits pupils and their SEND very well. As a result of useful, relevant training, teachers are experts in supporting pupils' SEND as well as being subject experts. They skilfully adapt and reshape the well-planned and sequenced curriculum to meet pupils' individual needs well.

Developing pupils' communication and social skills is at the heart of all the school does. Pupils benefit hugely from bespoke speech and language therapy programmes which enable them to work successfully towards their personal education, health and care (EHC) plan end points. Therapy also enables pupils to access and understand their learning, as well as the world around them. As one pupil told us, 'I now understand how to do things. I feel happy now.' Reading is prioritised throughout the school. Skilled staff use a range of highly effective strategies which support pupils to become confident, fluent readers. Time is dedicated across the week to encourage pupils to develop their love of reading, despite their language difficulties.

Sixth-form students spend part of their week attending local further education colleges. Specialist support assistants skilfully support them to achieve in a range of suitable vocational courses. English and mathematics work completed at Moor House college complements their vocational learning.

As a result of comprehensive careers information, education, advice and guidance, pupils make informed, sensible choices about their futures. All pupils benefit from relevant work experience, with older students experiencing up to 250 hours annually.

Moor House has a staff team dedicated to improving pupils' mental health and well-being. Led by a psychotherapist, the team of experts work closely with all staff, as well as with pupils and their families. Consequently, pupils are helped to understand their own emotions and develop a positive self-image. This work links closely with the social skills curriculum pupils follow and leads to increased autonomy and confidence for pupils.

Pupils learn to be responsible citizens, both in school and the wider community, for example by helping to run extra-curricular activities or oversee fundraising events. Pupils are keen to understand the wider world and help others. They give their time freely, participating in a range of roles such as volunteering at food banks and community kitchens. Pupils strive to gain senior awards, where they collect house points throughout the year. They work hard 'doing the right thing' to gain points. Pupils know that, while this is competitive and fun, rewards are not given lightly!

Leaders have created a culture where staff feel heard and valued. Staff appreciate the support they get from leaders and how well everyone works together to share expertise. They are proud that they are able to successfully support pupils to thrive.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have ensured that school safeguarding systems are clear and robust. Staff are knowledgeable as a result of thoughtful, relevant and, when needed, proactive safeguarding training. Consequently, staff understand their responsibilities well. Any concerns they have are reported quickly and acted on swiftly by leaders.

When required, leaders are tenacious in chasing and securing information from external agencies. The mental health and well-being team allows pupils and their families to access invaluable support as quickly as possible when needed.

Pupils know how to keep themselves safe as they are taught this in appropriate ways. For example, policies about staying safe when online have been adapted with language support to ensure that pupils are able to understand them.

Background

When we have judged a school to be outstanding, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. 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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be outstanding in June 2014.

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

Unique reference number	125454
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	10242191
Type of school	Special
School category	Non-maintained special
Age range of pupils	7 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	205
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	71
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Stuart Dennison
Principal	Helen Middleton
Website	www.moorhouseschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	3 October 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Moor House School and College is a special school for pupils aged 7 to 19. All pupils at the school have speech and language difficulties and have an EHC plan.
- Since the last inspection, the school has continued to grow, with the number of pupils on roll rapidly increasing.
- 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 principal, senior leaders, directors of learning, teachers and specialist teaching assistants. The lead inspector also met with multidisciplinary staff

including speech and language therapists, occupational therapists and a psychotherapist.

- The lead inspector 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: English and communication, science, and personal, social, health and citizenship education. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with leaders, visited a sample of lessons, also with leaders, spoke to staff, talked to or observed pupils and looked at their work or evidence of their learning.
- Inspectors looked at curriculum information and a range of documentation, including for individual pupils. This included EHC plans, individual pupil targets, therapy reports and information and annual review documentation.
- To look closely at safeguarding in the school, inspectors spoke to leaders, pupils, staff and 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 72 responses to the online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text responses. They also considered the views of 45 pupils and 73 staff who completed the Ofsted surveys.
- The inspectors only inspected the education provision at this school.

Inspection team

Maxine McDonald-Taylor, lead inspector Ofsted Inspector

Christine Bulmer Ofsted Inspector

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