

Inspection of Malden Oaks School and Tuition Service

The Dukes Centre, Dukes Avenue, Kingston upon Thames, Surrey KT2 5QY

Inspection dates: 26 and 27 September 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Sixth-form provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy the community feel of Malden Oaks school. They think staff understand them and their needs very well. They appreciate how staff give them the time, resources and help they need to learn. This enables pupils to rediscover an enjoyment in coming to school even when their previous placements have been unsuccessful.

Leaders are ambitious for all pupils. Pupils achieve well from many varied starting points. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the way their child's opportunities have been transformed since joining the school.

Pupils are able to pursue their interests and learn new skills. For example, they explore wildlife in a nearby river and learn how to whittle in willow. Pupils get the chance to attempt and to achieve the Duke of Edinburgh's Award.

Pupils behave with courtesy and great consideration for one another around school. They understand and live up to the values which the school makes sure they learn. Lessons are very seldom disrupted. Bullying is rare and tackled effectively when it does occur.

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

Most pupils at this school have special educational needs and/or disabilities. They join the school at different times throughout the year. Staff determine what pupils already know and can do accurately and thoroughly. They use this knowledge to organise time and resources effectively so pupils have the support they need to achieve well. Teachers know what works well to engage pupils' interest. They have secure subject knowledge, which they use to pick up gaps in pupils' understanding and help them catch up with learning they have previously missed.

Students in the sixth form are offered a suitable range of course options, including A levels and the opportunity to improve their GCSE grades. They grow confident in asking probing questions about moral issues. For example, they wonder how people in Tudor times might have understood what racism is when studying Shakespeare's *Othello*.

The school has a broad curriculum which enables pupils to learn and achieve well across both academic and vocational subjects. However, in some subjects, the school has not consistently identified what pupils are expected to learn and in which order. Where this thinking is vague, it is harder for staff to establish where to start pupils off when they join the school and to check how much the pupils have learned and remembered.

Pupils learn the enjoyment to be had from reading, even when they have had limited experience of this before. The school has established a phonics programme

for the small number of pupils who need to reinforce their reading skills in order to learn to read with confidence.

The very positive relationships between staff and pupils lead to a serene, purposeful atmosphere in lessons and throughout the school. Pupils gain confidence in building and maintaining relationships with one another. Staff are quick to notice the signs that a pupil needs support to regulate their behaviour. They skilfully and calmly help pupils to become relaxed and focused again.

The school is successful in ensuring that pupils who have often missed lots of school in the past improve their attendance significantly. For those pupils who continue to struggle to attend regularly, the school acts effectively to make sure this does not undermine their achievement.

Pupils, and students in the sixth form, receive helpful and unbiased careers advice, tailored to suit the needs of individuals. Leaders are successful in ensuring that almost all pupils progress into education, employment and/or training after they leave. They keep in touch with pupils to check these placements are being sustained.

Pupils have wide-ranging opportunities to find out more about what intrigues and interests them. 'Communal catering', in which classes take turns to cook a meal for one another, gives pupils a sense of achievement and helps them learn how to eat healthily.

Staff are positive about how leaders consider their workload and well-being. They think the chance to talk together at the end of each day helps them to share concerns and go home reassured.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, the curriculum does not set out precisely enough what it is the school wants pupils to learn and remember and in what order. This makes it harder for teachers to identify what pupils need to learn next and to check how well pupils remember what they have been taught before. The school should ensure that key knowledge is clearly identified and sequenced in all subjects.

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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	102562
Local authority	Kingston upon Thames
Inspection number	10293242
Type of school	Pupil referral unit
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	95
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	24
Appropriate authority	The management committee
Chair of management committee	Julie Key
Headteacher	Samantha Axbey
Website	www.maldenoaks.org
Date of previous inspection	27 June 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Malden Oaks is a pupil referral unit which provides education for pupils who have social, emotional and mental health needs. Some pupils are dual-registered with mainstream schools.
- The school makes use of nine unregistered alternative providers who offer vocational courses for pupils as part of their programme of study.

Information about this inspection

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

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, personal, social, health and economic education and design technology. For each deep dive, the inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors discussed the school's work with senior leaders on two of the school's sites, met members of the management committee and a representative of the local authority. They spoke with leaders responsible for managing the school's tuition and outreach work.
- The inspector took account of responses to Ofsted's online surveys from parents and staff.

Inspection team

Andrew Wright, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Lucy Wijsveld

Ofsted Inspector

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