

Inspection of Capella House School

Egerton Road, Twickenham TW2 7SL

Inspection dates: 2 and 3 November 2023

Overall effectiveness

Good

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Good

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Dominic Sunderland. This school is part of the Auriga Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Ivan Pryce, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Harry James.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school is named after Capella, the brightest star. Pupils becoming 'bright stars' is embodied in the school ethos of 'Hear our voices, see us shine'. This is realised. Pupils are confident to speak up and speak out. They recognise things that they can do now that they could not do when they were younger; they are confident about their futures. They flourish here because relationships are highly positive, and effective, at supporting them to reach their full potential.

Pupils are happy and kept safe. This is because there are always adults around who will help them when they need it. Pupils appreciate this help to build their social skills and friendships. Staff attitudes to behaviour are highly respectful. As a result, the level of trust built between staff and pupils helps to ensure behaviour is exceptional.

Pupils achieve well here. There is a broad and balanced curriculum. Pupils learn well and develop their knowledge and understanding effectively across most subjects. Typically, the curriculum prepares pupils well for the next stage of their education and future lives.

Pupils are keen to take on the additional responsibilities available to them, for example as school councillors. They are consulted about school decisions and know adults will listen to them. For example, older pupils have identified and suggested additional clubs based on their interests.

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

Leaders have prioritised reading. In the primary phase, the teaching of phonics starts as soon as pupils have settled into school. Although all staff have been trained to implement the school's new phonics programme, further training is required to fully embed the early reading curriculum. Books used to teach reading are typically well matched to the sounds that pupils know, helping them to read with growing accuracy and confidence. Regular assessments identify any misconceptions in pupils' knowledge and well-targeted support is provided to address these gaps, so pupils keep up. In the secondary phase, those pupils at the earlier stages of learning to read continue to be well supported through regular reading practice and language interventions.

Pupils follow an ambitious curriculum. Leaders have identified the knowledge, skills and vocabulary that pupils need to know in each subject, from Reception through to Year 11. Careful thought has been given to how the curriculum is sequenced and presented, to help pupils learn and remember more over time. For example, in art, younger pupils practise creating different types of line. This enables older pupils to represent water with accuracy when painting. Similarly, in mathematics, younger pupils practise making totals using different numbers. This important foundation knowledge

supports older pupils to complete more-complex calculations involving percentages with accuracy.

Leaders evaluate the curriculum and make necessary adaptations. Where aspects of the curriculum have undergone recent change, pupils' learning sometimes needs to be more securely embedded so that they deepen their knowledge and understanding.

The support for pupils' behaviour is excellent. Leaders work closely with specialists, including speech and language therapists and occupational therapists, to secure advice and guidance. The information provided and targets from education, health and care plans inform pupils' individualised programmes of integrated therapies. Information is clearly communicated with staff. This ensures that pupils are very well supported to access the planned curriculum. Individualised behaviour plans equip staff to manage any dysregulation. Some pupils need support to refocus but settle quickly because staff use agreed strategies consistently. As a result, classrooms are calm and conducive to learning. Attendance is monitored rigorously. Any patterns are identified, and families are supported to ensure all pupils attend school each day.

Pupils' wider personal development is exceptional. Pupils are very well prepared for life in modern Britain. The curriculum for personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education, including relationships and sex education, is carefully designed. For example, pupils learn about important values such as equality, liberty, tolerance and respect. Pupils are well supported to understand the importance of healthy and safe relationships, including complex issues about consent and gender.

The school has a well-structured careers programme, including impartial information about different professions and courses. Pupils are helped to make informed choices about their next stage of education, employment or training.

There are several staff who are either new to the school, leading aspects of the curriculum or members of the senior leadership team. A well-considered plan is in place to ensure these staff are supported in their new roles to maintain oversight of the curriculum and its impact. Staff are overwhelmingly positive about the support they receive to manage their workload and well-being. For example, they value the weekly 'appreciation board' which recognises and celebrates their work.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve? (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Aspects of the curriculum in different subjects, including early reading, continue to evolve. Where this is the case, learning sometimes needs to be more securely embedded so that pupils deepen their knowledge and understanding. The school should continue its work to develop subject leaders. This will help to ensure that

oversight of curriculum adaptations is checked, and appropriate support and training are provided for staff where needed.

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	147188
Local authority	Richmond Upon Thames
Inspection number	10290361
Type of school	All-through special
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	4 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	65
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Harry James
Headteacher	Dominic Sunderland
Website	www.capellahouse.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Capella House School opened as a free school in September 2019. The school is part of the Auriga Academy Trust.
- The school is a smaller-than-average-sized all-through special school.
- The headteacher was appointed in September 2021 along with a head of the primary centre. The assistant headteacher of the secondary phase was appointed in September 2023.
- The school has two sites – one for primary-age pupils and a separate site for secondary-age pupils.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

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. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, assistant headteacher and members of staff. They spoke with trustees, including the chair of the trust board and the CEO of the Auriga Academy Trust. Discussions were also held with members of the local governing board.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics PSHE and art. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, discussed the curriculum, visited lessons, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspectors also considered the curriculum in other subjects.
- The inspectors considered early mathematics in the Reception class.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the 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.
- The inspectors looked at a range of documents, including leaders' priorities for improvement.
- The views of pupils, parents and staff were gathered through discussions, and responses to Ofsted's surveys were considered.

Inspection team

Samantha Ingram, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Aliki Constantopoulou

His Majesty's Inspector

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