

Pathways Education

Sundial Stables, Sundial House, Jumps Road, Churt, Farnham, Surrey GU10 2LB

Inspection dates

30 November 2023

Overall outcome

The school is likely to meet the relevant independent school standards if the material changes relating to the school provision are implemented

Main inspection findings

Part 1. Quality of education provided

Paragraphs 2(1)–2(2)(b), 2(2)(d)–2(2)(e)(iii), 2(2)(h)–2A(1)(b), 2A(1)(d)–2A(2), 3 and 4

- The curriculum at Pathways Education is designed to 'prepare pupils for life and equip them with the skills to be able to contribute positively to society'. Many pupils will have experienced trauma and have specific special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) linked to this. All pupils will have an education, health and care (EHC) plan for social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs and/or autism. They may not have attended school for extended periods prior to joining.
- The school intends that the proposed key stage 4 pupils will study a broad curriculum that will prepare them for adult life. The curriculum will be adapted according to pupils' individual starting points.
- The school's written curriculum policy is supported by appropriate plans. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 will work towards achieving a range of academic and vocational qualifications. Reading will be prioritised.
- As with the provision for current pupils, class sizes will be small. The well-qualified teachers will be supported by teaching assistants. The school intends to appoint two additional members of staff. They will undergo a carefully considered induction process to allow them to understand the expectations of the school and the needs of all pupils.
- Assessment processes are already established for the current pupils at the school. These are fit for purpose. Leaders intend to use the same processes with older pupils should the material change be granted.
- All pupils of secondary-school age will continue to receive appropriate and bespoke careers education and guidance. The school has established connections with a range of local businesses to provide work experience.
- These independent school standards (the standards) are likely to be met if the material change request is approved.

Part 2. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Paragraph 5–5(d)(iii)

- The school attaches great importance to supporting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development. Much of this is delivered within the day-to-day curriculum, including through the school's personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme. Sex and relationships education is taught by a specialist teacher.
- Most of the learning and personal support offered by the school are delivered in small groups or on a one-to-one basis. This means that staff can target individuals' specific needs and personalise this area of provision as required. Pupils learn about different cultural traditions so that they develop greater understanding of their own and other cultures. This work considers those with protected characteristics as set out in the Equality Act 2010.
- Staff foster positive relationships with pupils and build their confidence, resilience and self-esteem. They support pupils to recognise and understand their feelings, and to appreciate the impact of their actions on others. Staff adopt a restorative, positive approach to help pupils reflect on their behaviour and to make positive choices.
- The PSHE programme supports pupils to learn about life in modern Britain and to become part of their local community. Pupils visit the library and take part in a wide range of sporting activities such as swimming and sailing.
- Pupils have supervised access to the extensive grounds of the country house where the school is situated. These include mature gardens, lawned areas, a tennis court and a forest school, which provide an attractive and peaceful setting for school life. Pupils use facilities such as the marquee and the music recording studio, and go fishing in the pond regularly. Activities such as these make a valuable contribution to pupils' social, spiritual and personal development and to their enjoyment of school.
- The school has ensured that all relevant standards in part 2 are likely to continue to be met if the material change is approved.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraphs 7–7(b), 32(1) and 32(1)(c)

- The school has made suitable arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils. Safeguarding was judged to be effective at the school's last standard inspection in May 2022. Knowing and understanding pupils' starting points and the challenges each individual faces sits at the heart of the school's work to keep its pupils safe.
- There is an appropriate safeguarding policy, which is published on the school's website. It reflects the current statutory guidance.
- Basic aspects such as statutory and ongoing safeguarding training and procedures to follow when staff have concerns are well established. Staff are alert to the additional risks faced by pupils with SEND. They report concerns using the school's online reporting system. These records are well maintained.

- The designated safeguarding lead and deputy safeguarding leads have had suitable training and understand their responsibilities. This includes escalating any worries to the appropriate outside agencies when required.

Paragraph 11, 12, 14 and 16

- There is a comprehensive health and safety policy in place. Staff with specific responsibilities linked to health and safety are experienced and understand their roles. For instance, they ensure regular legionella and asbestos checks are carried out at appropriate intervals.
- The school complies with the relevant fire safety regulations. The proprietor ensures that checks on fire safety equipment take place regularly and procedures are fit for purpose. Routine checks on aspects such as fire alarms and emergency lighting are fully in place. All staff who work at the school have completed fire safety training.
- Ratios of staff to pupils are high to reflect the complexity of pupils' needs. Well-established routines and policies to ensure that pupils are adequately supervised are in place. The school intends to appoint two additional staff members to ensure they continue to provide a safe environment should the material change be approved.
- There are detailed and appropriate risk assessments in place. These set out clearly likely risks and the strategies to reduce them. The school ensures that each pupil has their own risk assessment which takes account of potential risks. These are discussed with all who work with the pupils so that risks may be managed. Leaders intend to continue this approach if the additional pupils are permitted.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met.

Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

Paragraph 18(2)–18(2)(e), 18(3), 20(6)–20(6)(b)(ii), 20(6)(c), 21(1)–21(3)(b), 21(6)

- The school's single central record is fit for purpose. It contains all the checks required on staff and those in positions of governance, including members of the proprietor body. The school does not intend to use supply or agency staff.
- Recruitment procedures are sound. Key leaders have completed appropriate training linked to safer recruitment. They have close oversight of the recruitment process, making sure that all elements are completed properly, from initial advertisement to appointment, and beyond.
- The standards in this part are likely to continue to be met if the material change request is approved.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraph 23(1)–23(1)(c), 24(1)–24(1)(b), 24(2), 25–29(1)(b)

- The school is located on its own plot in what was formerly a stable block in the grounds of a country house. The site already has the capacity to provide for the additional number of pupils the proprietor has applied for in this material change.
- The site and grounds are well maintained. The outdoor area is extensive and is used to facilitate different strands of the curriculum, as well as providing suitable space for

pupils to play and take breaks from learning. There is sufficient lighting around the buildings and in the grounds to ensure safe passage in the dark.

- The premises comprise two fairly large classrooms, a kitchen, and two other teaching spaces. Each room is bright, airy and well equipped, and the acoustics are suitable. There is allocated accommodation for the medical examination and treatment of pupils, as well as the short-term care of those who are sick or injured. It is a short walk to the nearest toilet.
- There are suitable toilet facilities in place for both pupils and staff. All facilities have sufficient water supplies for hand washing, and the temperature of hot water is regulated appropriately. Drinking water is accessible and readily available to pupils.
- The requirements of part 5 of the standards are likely to be met if the material change is granted.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34(1)–34(1)(c)

- School leaders and those responsible for governance have a clear rationale for the material change applied for. They recognise pupils' need for stability and so intend to increase the capacity to include key stage 4. This will mean the school has longer to provide education specifically for pupils with SEMH needs and/or autism.
- The proprietor body and the local governing board are well qualified. They have experience of running independent special schools. The school has drawn on this experience to identify what needs to be done and how to ensure that pupils are successful in aspects of school life. They have a strong understanding of the independent school standards.
- The school places strong emphasis on developing pupils' confidence, self-worth, and independence in readiness for the next stage of their education, including college, apprenticeships or employment. This is reflected in the school's aims and vision as well as in the curriculum they have planned for the proposed new phase.
- All aspects of the independent school standards assessed as part of this inspection were found likely to be met if the material change is approved. Part 8 is also likely to continue to be met if the material change is implemented.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school is likely to meet the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements that are relevant to the material change.

School details

Unique reference number	147768
DfE registration number	936/6040
Inspection number	10318332

This inspection was carried out under section 162(4) of the Education Act 2002, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's likely compliance with the independent school standards relevant to the material change that the school has applied to make.

Type of school	Other independent special school
School status	Independent special school
Proprietor	Pathways Education Ltd
Chair	Joanne Pickford
Headteacher	Nazya Ghalib
Annual fees (day pupils)	£61,111
Telephone number	01428 777673
Website	www.pathways-ed.org
Email address	office@pathways-ed.org
Date of previous standard inspection	11 to 13 May 2022

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal	Inspector's recommendation
Age range of pupils	9 to 14	9 to 16	9 to 16
Number of pupils on the school roll	10	14	14

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Mixed
Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	2	14
Number of part-time pupils	8	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	10	14
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	10	14
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	10	14

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	4	5
Number of part-time teaching staff	0	0
Number of staff in the welfare provision	4	5

Information about this school

- Pathways Education is an independent special school located in Surrey.
- All pupils at the school have an education, health and care (EHC) plan. The school caters for pupils with a range of complex needs. Most pupils have a diagnosis of autism or have SEMH needs. Pupils have frequently had a negative experience of education and arrive with high levels of anxiety about school.
- The school's last standard inspection took place in May 2022, when its overall effectiveness was judged to be good.

- The school is currently using two unregistered alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was commissioned by the Department for Education (DfE) in response to the school's request to increase the number of pupils on roll from up to 12 to up to 14 pupils. The school also requested to increase the age range of pupils from 14 to 16 years. The additional pupils would be pupils with an EHC plan for SEMH needs or autism.
- The purpose of the inspection was to check whether the school is likely to meet the relevant standards if the requested material change is approved.
- This was the first material change inspection for this application.
- The inspector met with the headteacher and other leaders. She also spoke with the chair of the proprietor body, and met with the chair of governors and one other governor. The inspector had a tour of the school site, briefly talking to pupils and staff when doing so.
- The inspector also reviewed the school's website and considered a wide range of policies and documents relating to the specific independent school standards that were within the scope of this inspection. This included checking the single central record and safeguarding arrangements.

Inspection team

Louise Walker, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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