

# Inspection of Freemantles School

Smarts Heath Road, Mayford Green, Woking Surrey GU22 0AN

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Inspection dates: 21 and 22 November 2023

## **Overall effectiveness**

**Outstanding**

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The quality of education

**Outstanding**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Outstanding**

Personal development

**Outstanding**

Leadership and management

**Outstanding**

Early years provision

**Outstanding**

Sixth-form provision

**Outstanding**

Previous inspection grade

Outstanding

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

Freemantles School provides an exceptional quality of care and education. Staff place pupils' emotional well-being front and centre of every decision made about an individual's education. Staff provide a safe and nurturing environment so that pupils can thrive.

Pupils learn to communicate through an impressive command of communication methods. Pupils are considerate of others because staff consistently model what respect and kindness look like. Smiles and cheery greetings in the corridor are abundant. Highly effective classroom routines mean that pupils know exactly what to expect and when. This helps pupils to feel calm and secure, and it adds to the sense of serenity that pervades the whole school.

Pupils follow an inspiring and ambitious curriculum, which helps them to acquire important knowledge and skills. Each day, fleets of school minibuses take pupils out into the community to practise applying their learning in the 'real world'. This includes opportunities for Reception children to shop for items that start with the letters they have been learning. These thoughtful activities also support pupils to manage their worries about new places, sights and sounds. Every part of the curriculum is meticulously planned and delivered to help pupils achieve everything they are capable of.

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

The meticulously designed curriculum provides pupils with the skills and knowledge they need to thrive socially and academically. Pupils are taught essential communication, literacy and numeracy skills. They also learn to make sense of the world around them while developing independence and personal skills. Teachers order learning in a logical way. This helps pupils make connections between ideas and apply them to real-life situations.

In Reception, children explore new textures, tastes and sounds through supported play. Highly trained staff help children to focus their attention and engage well with their classmates and the classroom environment. For older pupils, the curriculum ensures that pupils learn essential life skills, such as learning to cook and using money. Learning is not limited to the classroom. At least twice per week, pupils visit the local area to undertake 'Community Learning'. They practise literacy skills by reading road signs to navigate around town. They also develop their interpersonal skills and confidence when out in public. This essential learning is part of a comprehensive package of support that readies pupils for adulthood.

Staff routinely monitor pupils' progress through the curriculum and against the targets set out in education, health and care (EHC) plans. Staff break plans down into smaller learning goals, which they review regularly. Staff involve parents and pupils in this process. Staff engage with parents very well. Regular contact means that support for pupils is seamless between the school and home. When needed,

staff support parents to establish routines at home, such as bathing and sleeping. Parents speak highly of this partnership. As pupils progress through the school, their ability to explain and communicate their views is a testament to the extensive and effective support provided.

Reading is an absolute priority. Staff have expert training to help pupils gain a secure understanding of letters and sounds. In Reception, staff consistently model how to use new words and sounds. This precise support extends up to sixth form, to enable pupils to become increasingly more fluent and confident readers. Pupils read every day from an exciting range of texts. Pupils immerse themselves in stories. They enjoy acting them out or writing their own stories to perform in a school pantomime.

Routines are exceptionally well embedded in this school. Pupils know exactly what staff expect of them. This helps them to feel happy and secure. If they do find it hard to manage their feelings, staff provide effective support to help pupils feel calm again. Pupils use a range of communication aids to express their feelings with impressive competency. Detailed plans set out strategies that staff use to manage behaviour. Staff use them to help pupils engage safely with peers and when out in the community. Staff review them regularly to check that pupils are receiving the right help.

Pupils attend well because they do not want to miss out on any of the fantastic learning that the school provides. Weekly trips to the leisure centre or local parks provide further opportunities to keep fit and learn new skills, such as swimming. Pupils plant and grow food in the wonderful horticulture 'HEART' space. They enjoy making woodland dens and building fires as part of the forest school provision. Older pupils learn important employability skills. This includes building and maintaining bikes and kit cars, as well as developing skills in customer service and food preparation. An extensive careers programme and work experience offer raises pupils aspirations and widens their ambitions for the future.

The school ensures that all staff have the training and expertise they need to provide the excellent care and provision on offer. In turn, staff provide an extensive amount of valuable advice and guidance to the wider education community. Leaders continuously seek to refine and improve while being considerate of staff well-being. Staff report a strong sense of belonging to the 'Freemantles family dynamic'. They demonstrate an absolute commitment to providing the very best for all pupils.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	125477
<b>Local authority</b>	Surrey
<b>Inspection number</b>	10240354
<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	234
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	27
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	David Vaughan
<b>Headteacher</b>	Justin Price
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.freemantles.surrey.sch.uk">www.freemantles.surrey.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	16 and 17 November 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Freemantles Special School caters for pupils between the ages of four and 19 years who have complex social communication needs and/or autism.
- All pupils have an EHC plan.
- The school currently makes use of one alternative provider of education.
- The school is commissioned by Surrey County Council to run an outreach service for pupils with autism in mainstream schools. Currently, the outreach service is supporting nearly 2,750 pupils in Surrey schools.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement 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.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with senior leaders, staff and pupils. The lead inspector also met with the representatives of the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- The lead inspector also spoke to a representative of the local authority.
- The inspection team carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading and communication, mathematics, personal, social and health education, and understanding the world. They discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, teachers and pupils. They visited lessons and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The lead inspector had a telephone conversation with the provider of alternative provision. They considered the suitability of the curriculum offer and arrangements to safeguard pupils while attending the provision.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the Ofsted Parent View questionnaire, including the free-text comments. They also took account of the responses to the confidential staff survey and gathered the views of both staff and pupils throughout the inspection.
- 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 reviewed and scrutinised a range of the school's documentation, including leaders' plans for improving the school, minutes of governor meetings and records of attendance and behaviour incidents.

## Inspection team

Michelle Payne, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Alan Johnson	Ofsted Inspector
Gary Tostevin	Ofsted Inspector

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