

Inspection of an outstanding school: Sutton Tuition and Reintegration Service

Drapers Centre, Monkey Puzzle Way, Carshalton, Surrey SM5 4NR

Inspection dates:

20 and 21 February 2024

Outcome

Sutton Tuition and Reintegration Service (STARS) continues to be an outstanding school.

What is it like to attend this school?

From the minute pupils step into reception at the main site or into the hospital classroom at the Royal Marsden, they are greeted with warmth and smiles. Staff are genuinely pleased to see them. Life at STARS is very calm, routines are well established. Pupils behave very well and take great pride in their work.

'Nurturing' and 'ambitious' are words that describe STARS well. Staff achieve the right balance of supporting pupils, for example with their anxiety, yet also challenging them to help develop their resilience. Over time, pupils learn to push through and keep going when schoolwork, and life, becomes more difficult.

Learning is important at STARS. Lessons are taken seriously, expectations are high. Staff carefully help pupils to close gaps in their knowledge and understanding. Pupils who stay at STARS to the end of Year 11 go on to achieve well, such as in their GCSEs. Pupils of all ages are very well prepared for adulthood. The weekly Friday afternoon trips help pupils to go out and feel part of their local community.

Leaders' high ambition also shines through for pupils in the hospital classroom. Whenever pupils arrive during the day, staff are ready to jump into action. Much thought is given to deciding what pupils will be taught and how to maximise the time available for learning.

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

Pupils who join STARS have often been out of education for a long time and/or have struggled with mainstream education. Staff work closely with education, health and social care practitioners to understand and meet pupils' needs, helping to break down barriers to learning. Pupils who have an education, health and care plan (EHC plan) are well supported, including with specialist therapeutic support.

Staff expertly help pupils re-engage with education. For example some pupils may start with online learning and then make the transition to attending school in person. This

process can often take time, but staff persist. Some pupils make great gains in their attendance and confidence. Staff do all they reasonably can to get pupils into school every single day.

STARS is a happy place to work. Everyone feels part of the team. Staff receive regular training and support to help them navigate working with the different complexities of pupils' emotional and mental health.

Pupils are taught as broad a curriculum as possible. In Years 7 to 9, pupils learn a range of subjects, including cooking and drama. Leaders work flexibly to support pupils in Years 10 and 11, such as offering additional subjects that link to their aspirations. At the hospital classroom, pupils creatively access a wide range of subjects, including physical education. Collectively, the school's decisions are sharply focused on what is right for pupils, carefully considering clinicians' views on pupils' timetables and their wellbeing.

As most pupils have significant gaps in their knowledge, the school rightly prioritises making sure that pupils achieve highly in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. That said, pupils routinely produce high-quality work across the curriculum.

Across all subjects, staff use their assessment of pupils' knowledge when they join STARS to carefully adapt their teaching to help pupils build their knowledge back up to where it should be. Staff use lots of ways such as quizzes and recaps to help pupils to remember what they have been taught. For example, through repeated practice in their cookery lessons, pupils can confidently demonstrate the 'bridge and claw' method from their work on knife skills. In English, pupils in Year 10 wrote well-structured reflections about Shakespeare's use of the balcony scene in *Romeo and Juliet*.

Leaders provide highly effective one-to-one support for pupils who need to improve their reading fluency. One of the many strengths in the school's approach to reading includes how well they adapt phonics resources for secondary-age pupils.

At STARS, personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education is also organised as a core subject. Pupils are taught a wide range of topics. They are fully encouraged to listen to each other's opinions when discussing sensitive issues, including those that arise from their daily current affairs sessions. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 benefit from life skills lessons, studying topics such as finance and taxes. Careers education is well-established, including learning about apprenticeships. All pupils have travel training built into the curriculum, this being a key feature of any trips. At the hospital school, PSHE is sensitively managed. Staff there also think outside the box to bring the outside world in to the classroom, for example with museums and authors coming to work with pupils.

Leaders have systems in place to support pupils in readiness for returning to mainstream education. This has been a challenging process for leaders, particularly given the complexity of some pupils' needs. Leaders are proactively working with the local authority and schools to find ways to further improve the proportion of pupils who successfully return to a mainstream school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be outstanding in September 2018.

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	135010
Local authority	Sutton
Inspection number	10296722
Type of school	Pupil referral unit
School category	Pupil referral unit
Age range of pupils	5 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	69
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	0
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Headteacher	Beverley Williamson
Website	www.starservice.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	26 and 27 September 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- STARS is a pupil referral unit for pupils with complex medical needs who live in Sutton.
- The school provides an education to pupils through:
 - the main site for Years 7 to 11, at the Drapers' Centre, Carshalton SM5 4NR
 - the hospital classroom at the Royal Marsden Hospital, Sutton SM2 5PT
 - bedside teaching at Queen Mary's Hospital, Carshalton SM5 1AA
 - home learning packages, for example for pupils too ill to attend school.
- All pupils have SEND. Most have complex social, emotional and mental health needs, alongside additional needs such as autism spectrum disorder.
- The proportion of pupils with an EHC plan is rising quickly. Approximately 13% of current pupils have an EHC plan.
- The hospital classroom provides an education for pupils with very complex medical needs.

- For a variety of reasons, the school commissioned an external review of its provision in June 2023. As a result, leaders are currently working with the local authority and local schools to implement significant changes in response to the review. These changes include, for example, how admission to the school is managed and expectations for pupils' reintegration back to mainstream provision.
- The school is currently using one registered alternative provider.
- 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

- 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 school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other senior staff. Inspectors also met with members of the school's management committee and spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, including reading, mathematics and PSHE. During each deep dive inspectors discussed the curriculum with leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers and pupils about their learning. Inspectors also reviewed samples of pupils' work.
- The lead inspector also visited the hospital classroom at the Royal Marsden Hospital. This visit included reviewing the deep dive subjects, considering support for pupils with EHC plans and pupils' wider personal development.
- Inspectors also reviewed the curriculum in a range of other subjects, for example reviewing curriculum documentation, talking to pupils, and reviewing their 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 also considered replies to Ofsted Parent View and the online surveys for staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Sam Hainey, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Lorraine Slee

Ofsted Inspector

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