

Inspection of Grange Park School

Borough Green Road, Wrotham, Sevenoaks, Kent TN15 7RD

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 February 2024

Overall effectiveness **Good**

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

What is it like to attend this school?

The school is expert in understanding and meeting the needs of pupils with autism spectrum disorder. Pupils appreciate the exceptionally calm and orderly environment throughout the school. All pupils receive carefully tailored support that enables them to become increasingly able to recognise and manage their physical and emotional well-being. As a result, pupils demonstrate exceptional levels of self-control and commitment to their education. Over time, all pupils develop the social skills and confidence to build positive relationships and friendships within the school community.

The school has great ambition for every pupil to achieve the best possible outcomes. This includes ensuring that every pupil has a clear pathway into further education or employment when they leave the school. The achievement of some pupils, however, is limited, because the support the school provides for those at an early stage of learning to read lacks precision.

Pupils have extensive opportunities for personal development. They talk with great enthusiasm about the range of trips, visits and workshops on offer, and the difference these opportunities have made to their lives. For example, pupils reflected on how an opportunity to perform on a professional stage had given them a deeper sense of confidence and self-belief.

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

All pupils have a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder, and many have other additional special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school ensures that every member of staff has an in-depth understanding of the needs of each pupil. Every aspect of the school's environment has been developed to meet pupils' needs. Staff ensure that each pupil gets the right provision set out in their education, health and care (EHC) plan. As a result, pupils fully engage with the school's academic curriculum as well as with the myriad of enriching experiences that form part of their education.

The school is determined that pupils have every opportunity to achieve the best possible outcomes. The curriculum is highly ambitious. Pupils study a very broad range of academic and vocational subjects. Across subjects, the school has mapped out clear learning pathways. In a small number of subjects, the school is continuing to refine the curriculum to ensure that the stages of learning each pupil needs to go through to achieve highly are clearly set out. Teachers across the school are expert in the subjects that they teach. All pupils study for GCSEs at key stage 4. Pupils' achievements at key stage 4 are built on in the school's sixth form very carefully and effectively.

The school provides sensitive support for pupils who arrive at the school at an early stage of learning to read. Some pupils arrive at the school having never had the confidence to read aloud. Staff work very successfully to rebuild pupils' reading

confidence through regular opportunities to read aloud with a familiar adult. Pupils are encouraged and supported to read for pleasure. The school has not, however, developed sufficient expertise in the teaching of phonics and reading to ensure that the support provided for pupils is precise and enables every pupil to learn to read effectively. As a result, not all pupils gain the phonics knowledge and language comprehension necessary to read as fluently and independently as they could.

The school's personal development programme is transformative for pupils and their families. At its heart is a carefully sequenced programme to develop pupils' social communication and emotional regulation. Through this programme, the school develops a personal toolkit for each pupil to promote their engagement and to ensure that they have the right support strategies in place. Pupils have ongoing opportunities to collaborate with staff in the development of their own toolkits, and to apply their learning in an increasingly wide range of contexts. For example, while pupils in the primary phase of the school are supported to develop the confidence to participate in school trips with adult support, older pupils are supported to become increasingly independent on trips and visits. This programme continues into the sixth form and is a key part of pupils' journey to independence. The school has developed a very strong careers programme that prepares pupils extremely well for their next steps.

Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is exceptionally positive. Pupils appreciate the belief that staff and leaders have in each of them and work hard to live up to the school's values and expectations. Older pupils have learned to use their toolkits to support their own self-regulation. Pupils learn to recognise, for example, when they need a movement break or a quiet moment. However, their intrinsic motivation means that they are back learning in their classrooms from the moment they are ready.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school has not developed sufficient expertise in the teaching of phonics and reading to ensure that the reading support provided is precise and enables every pupil to learn to read. Gaps in pupils' phonological knowledge and understanding are not systematically identified or addressed. Consequently, not all pupils are fully able to access the school's planned curriculum, and these pupils achieve less well than they could. The school should ensure that staff develop sufficient expertise so that every pupil gets the right support to learn to read.

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	119051
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10296284
Type of school	All-through
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	8 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	175
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	67
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Matthew Balfour and Sue Murray (Co-Chairs)
Headteacher	Renukah Atwell
Website	www.grange-park-school-kent.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	11 October 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher was appointed in June 2018.
- The co-chairs of the board of governors were appointed in March 2023.
- All pupils have an EHC plan and are placed by a local authority. The primary need of all pupils is autism; however, many pupils are comorbid. For example, over half of pupils also have a diagnosis of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.
- 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.
- 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. 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 and the wider leadership team. The lead inspector met with representatives of the school's governing board, including the co-chairs of the board, and spoke to a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, science and food technology. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The school's sixth form was considered in the deep dives. Inspectors discussed the curriculum for the sixth form and some other subjects with leaders.
- Inspectors considered pupils' behaviour and attitudes throughout the inspection and discussed the school's analysis of pupils' behaviour and attendance with leaders.
- Inspectors considered personal development through all deep dives. They met with leaders to discuss the school's personal development programme, including the curriculum for personal, social and health education (PSHE) and relationships education. Inspectors talked to pupils about PSHE and other aspects of the school's personal development programme.
- 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.

Inspection team

Alice Roberts, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Elaine Parkinson	Ofsted Inspector
Jason Philipsz	Ofsted Inspector

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