

Inspection of Fox Grove School

Kingston Road, Leatherhead, Surrey KT22 7PW

Inspection dates: 30 April and 1 May 2024

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

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

Not previously inspected under section 5
of the Education Act 2005

The principal of this school is Marie O'Rourke. This school is part of The Howard Partnership Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Louise Lee, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Ian Wilson.

What is it like to attend this school?

Fox Grove is an exceptional school. It is an inspirational place where pupils, at all stages of their school life, thrive, both socially and academically. The school is ambitious for every pupil. Through the exceptionally strong and trusting relationships with staff, pupils relish their learning across a breadth of subjects. As a result, pupils learn how to communicate their feelings and ideas very well. Children in the early years respond enthusiastically to stories. Students in the sixth form enjoy developing the skills they need for a successful life beyond school.

Staff are highly knowledgeable about the specific educational and personal needs of pupils. This results in every pupil progressing through an expertly designed curriculum that focuses on helping them to grow their love of learning.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. Where required, well-trained staff provide expert support, helping pupils to regulate their emotions with dignity. Pupils demonstrate an exceptional sense of belonging, pride and self-worth, understanding the overwhelmingly positive contribution that they make to their community. Bullying is understood and not tolerated. As a result, the school provides a safe and welcoming environment for everyone, including those with the most complex needs.

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

Leaders have meticulously designed a curriculum that provides pupils with the skills and knowledge they need to flourish and achieve. Pupils are taught essential communication, reading and numeracy skills. They also learn to be part of a thriving community, through developing independence and personal skills. Staff organise learning in a logical way. This encourages pupils to feel confident to tackle any challenges that they face, both in and out of school.

Pupils at the early stages of development learn to read through a well-designed phonics programme. Using repetition, rhyme and sensory props, pupils learn to respond to texts very well. Staff skilfully extend pupils' communication skills by building their knowledge of vocabulary and sentences. Pupils love stories and enjoy the opportunities staff give them to read and perform out loud. These reading opportunities are expanded as they move through the school. Students in sixth form develop the same passion for stories using texts that are right for them.

In early years, children explore new sounds, textures and rhymes through a carousel of activities. Highly trained staff help children to focus their attention and engage well with their classmates and the classroom environment. Leaders combine unbridled ambition with a methodical scientific approach to ensure that as pupils move through the school, they have age-appropriate experiences. Careers and planning for the future permeate through everything the school does. This results in pupils and their families feeling supported and empowered to aim high when deciding their next steps in education or employment.

Leaders rigorously 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 targets, which they review regularly. Leaders ensure that pupils, parents and carers have a meaningful role in this process. Indeed, this tenacious approach is also adopted when leaders consider pupil attendance. Regular contact between key staff and parents means that support for pupils is seamless between the school and home. The result is that everyone understands the importance of being at school. When needed, staff support parents to establish routines at home, such as with sleeping and attending medical appointments. Parents appreciate this partnership.

Pupils learn the routines of school and the importance of socialising with others exceptionally well. The routines of learning are well embedded. As a result, pupils learn to manage their emotions and are highly motivated to succeed. There is a calm, purposeful environment across the school. Everyone recognises their role in supporting the school's values to help everyone succeed.

The school works closely with trust leaders to ensure 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 provision while being considerate of staff well-being. Staff report a strong sense of being part of the school's journey so far, and actively help leaders to develop all aspects of school life. They demonstrate an absolute commitment to providing the very best for all pupils.

Trustees and local governors provide expertise and support in equal measure. They share the same vision of enabling pupils to flourish in their learning in preparation for the life after education. They ensure that all pupils have the resources, equipment and tools to do so. Staff are overwhelmingly proud to work at the school. They feel very well supported by leaders and undergo continuous training. They are well equipped to expertly meet the sensory, emotional and physical needs of each pupil.

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

Unique reference number	148575
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	10296477
Type of school	Special
School category	Free school special
Age range of pupils	4 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	131
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	6
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Ian Wilson
CEO of trust	Louise Lee
Principal	Marie O'Rourke
Website	www.foxgroveschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Fox Grove School educates pupils between the ages of four and 19 years who have a range of complex social and communication needs.
- All pupils have an EHC plan.
- The school is part of The Howard Partnership Trust.
- The school currently makes use of four unregistered alternative providers of education.
- 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.
- 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 senior leaders, staff and pupils. The lead inspector also met with the representatives of the trust, including the chair of trustees.
- The inspection team carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading and communication, English, mathematics, and personal, social and health education. Inspectors 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 a provider of alternative provision. He 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 local governing board meetings and records of attendance and behaviour incidents.

Inspection team

Gary Tostevin, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Jason Philipsz	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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