

Inspection of Ashley Park School

47 Hersham Road, Walton-on-Thames, Surrey KT12 1LE

Inspection dates: 21 to 23 May 2024

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Does the school meet the independent school standards? **Yes**

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils flourish at Ashley Park School. They understand and show the school's 'ACT' values of ambition, collaboration and trust. These values underpin the school's vision for what pupils will achieve. Pupils understand the high expectations that the school has for them, and they constantly strive to meet them. Pupils trust that adults here want the best for them.

Staff take time to know what support each pupil needs. They listen to the views of pupils and their parents, and work with them to put in place the most precise and effective help for pupils. Some parents comment on the positive changes in their child's life because of their attendance at this school.

Many of these pupils have had long periods of non-attendance at school before their time here. Consequently, the school's curriculum approach has centred on getting pupils ready to learn. This has led to increasingly confident pupils, who have the skills to be a positive part of the school community. This is most clear to see during social times, where pupils integrate well with each other and with staff. Adults have consistent behaviour expectations and help pupils to understand why these are important. Due to this, pupils show respect and consideration through the school.

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

The school is ambitious that all pupils will achieve well. The curriculum content is rich and broad. There has been careful thought about what these pupils will learn and in what order. The curriculum has been well designed to provide adequate time for pupils' personal development. It is driven through three distinct learning pathways. This enables the school to precisely match what will be taught to pupils' individual needs.

Due to pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), the school recognises that formal assessment may not be effective. Instead, staff use methods, such as speaking with pupils and reviewing their personal targets, to spot any gaps in knowledge successfully. Staff effectively use information from these checks to put in place expert and precise SEND support for pupils. Subsequently, pupils achieve well through most of the curriculum.

Staff expertise and knowledge of SEND help them to understand pupils' needs well. The curriculum has undergone recent changes, some of which are not yet embedded. This means that in some instances, lesson activities are not consistently effective in helping pupils to learn as well as they could. The school is currently training staff to understand the ambitious aims of the curriculum and how they can plan appropriately matched lesson activities.

The school prioritises reading. 'DEAR' (drop everything and read) time is a critical part of each pupil's day. Staff support pupils well during this time. They encourage pupils to read a range of rich texts. Some pupils need extra help to be accurate and

fluent readers. The school is still changing the approach to helping those at the earlier stages of reading. This support currently is not as precise as it could be.

A sense of mutual respect permeates the school. Staff are well trained to understand the specific needs of pupils. This shows in the expert and effective support they give pupils who are finding it difficult to manage their emotions. Staff build excellent relationships. This helps pupils to feel safe and cared for. The calm and purposeful environment created means that pupils feel comfortable to learn. They are positive about their learning and work with each other very well. As a result, low-level disruption is rare and does not have a negative impact on how well pupils are able to learn.

The school has a sharp focus on providing pupils with the skills they need to be ready for their next steps. Pupils learn about cultural diversity and celebrate difference in weekly assemblies. They develop knowledge of what is common among people from all walks of life. Through expertly planned life skills lessons, pupils also learn about themselves and their place in the world. They are taught to recognise and share their own views, while also listening to and respecting the thinking of others.

From Year 7 onwards, pupils learn about the world of work. The school arranges visits from external speakers to build pupils' awareness of the possible training and career options available to them. All pupils receive specialist, one-to-one, careers guidance sessions. This provides pupils with individualised pathways plans. These plans specifically identify the support that pupils will need to be able to achieve their goals. The school intends to improve the wider development provision for pupils. This includes setting up external work experience opportunities.

There has been rapid change since the school opened this academic year. The school has managed this well and has made sure that staff well-being has been prioritised. Staff subsequently feel well supported and valued by leaders at all levels. They recognise the need for review and change and believe in the vision for the school. The school has built positive working relationships with parents. The school has listened to and acted on the views of parents, in deciding on the SEND provision in place for their child. The proprietor and governing body provide the school with effective challenge and support. They have a robust strategic vision for the school and work well with all staff to achieve this. The proprietor is effective in the oversight of the independent school standards and ensures that they are securely met.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve? (Information for the school and proprietor)

- Occasionally, learning activities do not always match the intended learning well enough. As a result, not all pupils learn as well as they could through the taught curriculum. The school needs to ensure that staff have the knowledge they need to plan precise and purposeful activities that will help pupils build knowledge.
- The school is still developing its approach to supporting the weakest readers in the school. As a result, activities and resources used to help pupils learn to read are not yet as effective as they could be. The school should ensure staff have the knowledge to support the weaker readers to catch up quickly.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	149714
DfE registration number	936/6067
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	10322079
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent School
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	23
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	P Bloom LTD
Chair	Richard Power
Headteacher	Monika Hosker
Annual fees (day pupils)	£66,000
Telephone number	01932 379 043
Website	www.ashleyparkschool.co.uk
Email address	info@ashleyparkschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Ashley Park School provides specialist support for pupils with autism. All pupils attending the school have an education, health and care plan.
- The school currently does not make use of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

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 leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other leaders and staff. The lead inspector held meetings with the chair of the proprietor body and a member of the governing body.
- The inspection team carried out deep dives in English, mathematics, creative arts and personal, social, health and economics education. To do this, they met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum planning, had discussions with staff and pupils, visited lessons and looked at pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders and staff; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts children's interests first.
- The views of staff and parents were gathered through discussions and Ofsted's online surveys.
- The lead inspector toured the school site to gather evidence about compliance with the standards. Inspectors also reviewed a range of other documents and policies, including on the school's website.

Inspection team

Nina Marabese, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Kate Fripp

His Majesty's Inspector

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