

Inspection of Abingdon House School Purley

Godstone Road, Purley CR8 2AN

Inspection dates: 14 to 16 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?

Abingdon House School, during its first year in operation, has developed warm and respectful working relationships between staff and pupils. Pupils arrive at the school having experienced significant disruption to their education. They find the school is a happy and safe place to learn. Pupils feel listened to and valued. Pupils explained that staff are approachable and support them with any problems or concerns they may have.

Leaders ensure that the curriculum is designed and adapted to meet pupils' individual needs. Staff have high expectations for pupils' achievement. The school is determined for pupils to succeed. Most pupils are being prepared for examination courses and taught essential life skills.

Pupils are helped to manage their emotions. Staff make sure that the school has a calm learning environment where pupils behave well. Pupils are well supported to succeed in their learning. They develop talents and skills, such as learning musical instruments. Staff are committed to improving pupils' self-esteem and resilience through a range of educational experiences. For example, pupils benefit from personal safety sessions and visits to museums and sports competitions.

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

The school is ambitious for its pupils. The curriculum is designed to enable pupils to access a broad range of academic and vocational subjects. Although most pupils are new to the school, they are being prepared for vocational qualifications and GCSEs. Pupils benefit from individual teaching and support in lessons. This helps them develop good knowledge and skills in most subjects as they progress through the curriculum.

In many subjects, curriculum plans are well structured. Pupils build their knowledge in a sensible order. Teachers have good knowledge of the subjects they teach, and pupils' progress is evident. For example, in a science experiment, pupils accurately recorded the tension in a spring and compared it with an elastic band.

In a few subjects, the school's curricular thinking does not identify the important content pupils should learn. Leaders are fully aware of the variability. In these subjects, the curriculum is not implemented securely so that activities precisely match pupils' knowledge and skills. Consequently, pupils struggle to recall key subject-specific knowledge.

The school identifies pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities accurately. Staff are well trained to identify and adapt to pupils' different needs. Specialist staff are employed to help pupils and support staff. Teachers are mindful of gaps pupils may have in their learning due to interruptions in their previous school experiences. Staff check pupils' learning in lessons. They identify, and help to resolve, pupils' errors and misconceptions. However, the use of assessment is inconsistent.

Sometimes, teaching does not carefully use pupils' assessment information to check their understanding and recap on prior learning. This leads to pupils not being fully ready for future content.

The school prioritises the teaching of reading. Many pupils have not had positive experiences with reading or developing a love of books. Staff encourage as many opportunities as possible for pupils to read. Pupils receive tailored support from staff to improve reading skills. Staff work effectively to improve pupils' perceptions of reading. They ensure that pupils have access to high-quality texts. Most pupils are becoming confident readers, as a result.

Staff interact positively with pupils at all times of the day. This promotes a calm and orderly place to learn. Staff spend time getting to know each pupil when they join the school. They manage behaviour skilfully and help pupils to regulate themselves. The school enables pupils to develop positive attitudes to learning. Attendance at school for many pupils has been previously interrupted. The school has clear and effective strategies to improve attendance. Staff work closely with external agencies and parents and carers. They work tirelessly to ensure that pupils attend school regularly.

The provision for pupils' personal development is well thought out. There are plenty of opportunities for pupils to build their confidence and self-esteem. For example, leaders provide pupils with appropriate opportunities to learn about relationships and sex education in an age-appropriate way. Many activities are targeted specifically at the needs of individual pupils, helping them learn and develop important life skills. Pupils have outings to the local community to build confidence. For example, younger pupils planned a visit to a local café to purchase items within a budget.

Leaders, including trust members, know the school well. The school is well led and managed. The trust leaders have provided effective challenge and support for the school during its formative first year. Leaders know the school's strengths and priorities for development. Staff at the school feel valued and cared for. They know that leaders consider their well-being and workload.

The proprietor and trustees have ensured that all the independent school standards (the standards) are met. For example, the procedures in relation to first aid, fire safety, and health and safety are appropriate. The school's premises are maintained to a good standard. All necessary information is available to parents. The school's safeguarding policy is published on the school's website. The school complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

- In a few subjects, the school has not had the subject expertise to consider in enough depth what they expect pupils to learn. The delivery of the curriculum in these subjects does not ensure that pupils' learning builds securely on what they already know. Consequently, pupils' recall of subject content is not as strong as it should be. The school should ensure that the planned curriculum is delivered consistently well across all subjects.
- Some aspects of the school's assessment procedures are inconsistently applied. Sometimes, the checking of pupils' prior learning and identification of gaps and misconceptions in pupils' knowledge are not secure. The school must make sure that subject leaders and staff understand the purpose and expectations of the school assessment strategies. This will help teachers to identify pupils' next steps in learning so that pupils are fully ready for new subject content.

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	149578
DfE registration number	306/6034
Local authority	Croydon
Inspection number	10322618
Type of school	Other Independent Special School
School category	Independent School
Age range of pupils	7 to 15
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	30
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Aatif Hassan
Chair	Aatif Hassan
Headteacher	Jonathan Mansell
Annual fees (day pupils)	£48,900
Telephone number	0208 0922 080
Website	www.abingdonhouseschool.co.uk/purley-senior-school
Email address	purleyinfo@abingdonhouseschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Abingdon House School is an independent special school. Pupils who attend the school have a range of additional needs. All pupils have education, health and care plans.
- The school is registered to provide full-time education for up to 30 pupils. There are currently 30 on roll, aged 11 to 14.
- The headteacher was appointed in September 2022. The school opened in September 2023.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- This is the school's first standard inspection.

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 the chair of the board of directors.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, history, and personal, social and health education. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also looked at pupils' books and work for science and physical education.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; reviewed safeguarding records; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site and at lunchtime.

The school's proposed change to its maximum number of pupils to 100 and changes to the age-range of pupils to include 10 -17-year-olds.

The school has applied to the Department for Education (DfE) to make a 'material change' to its registration. At the DfE's request, we checked whether the school meets the relevant independent school standards if the DfE decides to approve the change. This part of the inspection was carried out under section 162(4) of the Education Act 2002.

- The outcome of this part of the inspection is: **the school meets the independent school standards relevant to the material change.**

Information about the material change inspection

Arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of all pupils in the school. The proprietor has ensured that the buildings have been refurbished to ensure sufficient space, (indoors and out), to accommodate 100 pupils. This has included specialist spaces required to deliver a broad and balanced curriculum in line with the Independent Schools Standards. There is a written curriculum policy. Plans and schemes of work are in place for the proposed additional year groups. These cover all learning and development requirements. A programme of training and recruitment for staff to deliver the activities has been planned to meet the needs of the additional pupils and the extended curriculum. Effective leadership and management ensure that the independent school standards are met consistently and that the school actively promotes the well-being of pupils.

Inspection team

Phil Garnham, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Teresa Neary

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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