

Inspection of Pathways Education

Sundial Stables, Sundial House, Jumps Road, Churt, Farnham, Surrey GU10 2LB

Inspection dates: 4 to 6 March 2025

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Good

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to this school, where they feel happy and safe. They appreciate that the adults in school get to know them well, so they understand how to support and motivate them. Most pupils who join this school have had difficult experiences of education previously. Pathways Education successfully provides a supportive environment for pupils to re-engage with learning.

Pupils understand that staff have high expectations of what they can achieve, while being flexible where needed. Pupils feel motivated by how the curriculum is tailored to their interests. They generally learn well as a result. Alongside an academic curriculum, pupils benefit from opportunities to learn outdoors, explore their natural surroundings and develop skills such as cycling and fishing.

Many of the pupils at this school have social, emotional and mental health needs. They benefit from the school's focus on helping them to recognise and manage their emotions. Staff model positive relationships and kindness. They provide opportunities for pupils to reflect on their behaviour and consider the perspectives of others. Over time, pupils make great strides in terms of their social skills, which makes a positive difference to their lives and preparation for adulthood.

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

The school has put in place a suitably broad curriculum with a particular focus on pupils' personal and social development. The curriculum provides pupils with the opportunity to study a broad range of subjects and meets the requirements of the independent school standards (the standards). Although it is clear what the school intends pupils to learn, there is some variability in how well tasks are chosen to achieve this. Sometimes learning activities are designed to engage pupils and capture their interest, but do not fully align with what pupils need to know and remember. This means that pupils do not always learn as well as they could.

Reading is strongly promoted. Pupils engage with a range of different texts, including non-fiction linked to their interests or the topics they are studying. Those pupils who need help to catch up with reading are identified quickly and benefit from timely and effective support.

When pupils join Pathways Education, staff at the school build up a detailed understanding of what they know and can do. This process begins before pupils' first day at the school. It includes identifying those areas where pupils need extra support or any special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) that they may have. Staff use this information well to inform the way they interact and communicate with pupils.

Behaviour at the school is typically calm and orderly. Although pupils sometimes fall out, bullying is not common. Any issues are resolved quickly and effectively. Nearly all pupils attend school regularly. This is a fantastic achievement for many who have

had significant breaks in school attendance or disruption to their education previously.

Personal development is understandably a priority for this school. Pupils benefit from a well-designed programme of personal, social, health and economic education. They learn about topics such as what makes a healthy relationship and how to stay safe online. There is a particular emphasis on learning about mental health and managing emotions. The school prepares pupils well for their next steps. For example, they teach pupils about careers and take them to visit local colleges. The school are in the process of ensuring that all secondary-age pupils receive individual careers advice and guidance. Pupils also learn important life skills, such as cooking, that help to prepare them for adulthood.

Leaders have an ambitious vision for the school, but this is not yet fully realised through strong shared practices. Over time, there has been some inconsistency in the school's approach to self-evaluation. Recent recruitment has enabled the governing body to expand its range of expertise and develop a more secure understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The proprietor has a reasonable oversight of the school's compliance with the standards as well as schedule 10 of the Equality Act. They have ensured that these requirements continue to be met. Minor issues were identified with some of the school's policies, which were rectified during the inspection.

The school is proactive in working with all members of its community. Parents and carers appreciate that school leaders work with them closely and supportively. Staff enjoy working at the school and feel supported in terms of their well-being and workload. Staff have received beneficial training on various aspects of SEND and how to support pupils socially and emotionally. There are plans in place to provide further training on the delivery of the curriculum and strengthen subject expertise.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

- There is variability in how well tasks align with the progression of knowledge set out in the curriculum. This means that what pupils are learning does not always build coherently over time. The school should ensure that teachers and support staff have the necessary expertise in the curriculum and its delivery so that this is consistently high quality.
- The school has high ambitions for the quality of education that it provides, but these are not fully realised through strong shared policies and practices. Areas for improvement, including to the quality of education, have not been identified and acted on as quickly as they could have been by the school. The proprietor and the school should strengthen their systems to check on the quality of education

provided and use this information to inform school improvement and staff professional development.

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	147768
DfE registration number	936/6040
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	10342160
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent day school
Age range of pupils	9 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	12
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Pathways Education Ltd
Chair	Joanne Pickford
Headteacher	Michael Vincent
Annual fees (day pupils)	£61,111
Telephone number	01428 777673
Website	www.pathways-ed.org
Email address	office@pathways-ed.org
Dates of previous inspection	11 to 13 May 2022

Information about this school

- Pathways Education is an independent special school for pupils with a range of needs. Most pupils have a diagnosis of autism or have social, emotional and mental health needs. All pupils who attend the school have an education, health and care plan with places funded by a local authority.
- The school's headteacher has changed since the last inspection. At the time of this inspection the deputy headteacher had been appointed as headteacher on an interim basis.
- The school operates from a single premises: Sundial Stables, Sundial House, Jumps Road, Churt, Farnham, Surrey.
- The school uses one unregistered 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 evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: communication, personal development and preparation for adulthood. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans and examples of pupils' work in some other subjects including cooking and project-based learning.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the 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 checked whether the school continues to meet the standards. This included looking at the school's premises and other relevant information such as policies, risk assessments and documents relating to health and safety.

- Inspectors spoke with staff and pupils at the school. Inspectors spoke with some parents and considered responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View. They also considered responses to the Ofsted surveys for staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Chris Ellison, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Anne Cullum

Ofsted Inspector

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