

Inspection of a school judged outstanding for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Gosden House School

Horsham Road, Bramley, Guildford, Surrey GU5 0AH

Inspection dates:

7 and 8 May 2025

Outcome

Gosden House School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Gosden House School is a truly exceptional place of calm and learning. Pupils enjoy arriving at school and they attend well. They make excellent progress towards their personal targets. Staff have very high expectations of what pupils can do and what they could achieve in the future. Pupils regularly rise to meet these expectations, and they behave very well. Their interactions with each other are kind and considerate. Pupils know staff are there to help them whenever they need it. They appreciate this greatly.

Pupils are proud of what they achieve. They know what they need to do to reach their learning goals. This is the result of a carefully designed curriculum. It is tailored to each pupil's needs and put into practice with skill, sensitivity and a sharp focus on learning.

The school weaves pupils' personal development, especially the skills needed for adulthood, through everything it does. Helping pupils understand how to take control of their lives starts in the early years and builds until pupils become 'Gosden Graduates' in Year 11. Whether this is through the many opportunities in work-related activities, learning new skills or classroom work, the impact is consistently strong. This includes pupils' understanding of how to keep themselves safe.

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

Pupils follow an appropriately tailored and ambitious curriculum. The targets from pupils' education, health and care (EHC) plans are pivotal to their curriculum. Staff break targets down into smaller steps for pupils. These targets fit seamlessly with the rest of the school's curriculum design. The school considers what is best for pupils' next steps. Staff

know their pupils remarkably well. As a result, they skilfully adapt their delivery of the curriculum to suit each pupil's needs.

A relentless focus on developing pupils' communication and reading skills runs throughout the school, starting immediately in the early years. Staff use a variety of effective approaches to support pupils' early communication skills. When the time is right for them, pupils follow a structured phonics approach. Staff tailor this exceptionally well. They give pupils lots of opportunities to rehearse and practise the sounds that different letters make. This supports pupils to develop their initial reading skills. The school clearly promotes the selection of appropriate books for pupils.

Pupils study a range of qualifications and accreditations. Staff work tirelessly to make links with local employers to enhance the broad curriculum offer with a range of vocational experiences. For example, pupils are given opportunities in motor mechanics as well as the school kitchen. The school meticulously prepares pupils for life beyond school. Pupils in Year 11 focus on making their best next step. They enjoy time learning how to be ready for this. The pinnacle of this success is reached through each pupil becoming a 'Godsen Graduate', celebrating leaving the school with the skills required to flourish.

The school goes above and beyond to provide for pupils' wider development. They ensure that the personal development programme instils lifelong values in pupils, for example respect and equality. The level of trust between staff and their pupils is exceptionally strong. Pupils learn essential life skills, such as learning to swim or going to the local shops to buy groceries. Careful consideration is given to pupils' mental well-being through activities such as growing vegetables in the gardens or looking after the animals on the farm. The school ensures that pupils enjoy as many experiences as they can. For example, everyone gets the opportunity to join in with school residential trips.

The school wants pupils to grow beyond what others may think possible. Pupils often achieve these expectations too. Parents and carers value this. Pupils have excellent opportunities to learn about themselves and healthy relationships with others. Staff carefully consider pupils' additional vulnerabilities when helping them with sensitive topics, such as when teaching pupils about how to stay safe online.

Staff are proud to work at Godsen House. Leaders create a climate where staff feel respected and valued. They thoughtfully consider staff workload. In doing so, they provide staff with the correct professional development, which supports them to carry out their roles effectively.

Governors understand their role and carry it out well. They are knowledgeable, experienced and committed to the school. Governors ensure that the school has a clear vision, manages its resources well and fulfils its statutory duties. They provide leaders with appropriate support and challenge.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024, graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged outstanding for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the third ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be outstanding for overall effectiveness in December 2010.

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	125452
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	10379828
Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	4 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	130
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	David Burr
Headteacher	Rebecca Smale
Website	www.gosden-house.surrey.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	19 and 20 November 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Gosden House School is a special school for pupils with moderate learning difficulties.
- All pupils have an EHC plan.
- The school uses three registered alternative provisions.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Year 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation 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 senior leaders, subject leaders and with representatives of the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- Inspectors discussed the curriculum and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- 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 reviewed a range of documents, including policies and analyses of pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors spoke to some pupils and staff about the school. They also observed pupils' behaviour during lunchtime and breaktimes.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff. There were no responses to the pupil survey to consider.
- Inspectors also considered the views of parents expressed through Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses.

Inspection team

Gary Tostevin, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

James Broadbridge

His Majesty's Inspector

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