

# Inspection of Maypole School

Green Street, Sunbury-on-Thames, Surrey TW16 6QE

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Inspection dates: 18 to 20 June 2024

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Outstanding**

Leadership and management **Good**

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

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

This is a nurturing school where the high aspirations of staff go hand in hand with an understanding that learning only happens when pupils are ready. Consequently, pupils enjoy their time here (though are sometimes reluctant to say so up front) and become successful learners again. When asked, 'what could be better here?' most struggle to identify anything except for comments about lunch. One clear message from pupils is that they feel understood and safe here. They recognise that their behaviour is not always perfect but are positive about the way staff support them to reflect when things have gone amiss.

One stand-out aspect of this new school is the support pupils receive on their journey to become confident and responsible members of society. For many pupils, this is a bigger challenge than academic achievement. Parents who talked to inspectors were particularly positive about how the school is transformational on pupils' lives in this respect.

Pupils are particularly positive about time spent 'off site'. Though some see this as a reward for their efforts in classrooms, the contribution this makes to pupils' social and emotional well-being is considerable. Staff know this is important. Their patience and guile in making this work are laudable.

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

This is a fledgling school that contradicts its age in the experiences it is already offering its pupils. This is mostly down to the dedication and hard work of staff, no matter what their role. All involved in the school, from the directors down, understand the complexities of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities who attend. They also go out of their way to recognise the additional barriers some pupils face linked to circumstances beyond the school gates. This creates an environment that enables pupils to thrive, many of whom have been out of education for long periods of time prior to joining.

Key to the school's success is the oversight of those in positions of governance. Directors have a high degree of 'hands-on' knowledge while maintaining a clear strategic vision going forward. A small team of external independent advisors, known as governors, also provide support. With a mix of backgrounds, including in finance and educational psychology, their work in providing a fresh eye on day-to-day life at Maypole is important. Sensible decisions are being made to ensure that the delicate balance between meeting the needs of current pupils and expanding the school further is maintained. Importantly, all of the relevant independent school standards continue to be met since the school opened.

Though only a small school, the curriculum offer has appropriate breadth. This helps pupils to be well prepared for their next stage of education, employment or training. Staff have carefully considered the balance between filling gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding while providing a balanced and relevant mix of

different subjects. This means that pupils are accessing a broadly equivalent offer to the national curriculum, though leaders know that some subjects do not yet provide a clear pathway of learning over time.

A strength of the curriculum offer comes in the school's work to support pupils who struggle to read. The majority of pupils join the school without the confidence to read fluently. This is compounded by a lack of motivation to read for pleasure. This issue is being tackled head on. Pupils benefit from bespoke interventions which identify the problems and target weaknesses in pupils' phonics knowledge. This in turn builds confidence and, importantly, a degree of self-motivation and pride when pupils experience success, including reading in front of inspectors.

Classroom visits showed pupils enjoying their growing confidence as learners. Expectations are high. Pupils rise to the challenges posed by set texts such as Shakespeare's, 'A Midsummer Night's Dream', not least linked to what they describe as the 'funny' language and how this is more difficult to read aloud.

The school's mathematics curriculum is equally ambitious. Staff sometimes miss chances to correct misconceptions when opportunities arise, including around vocabulary. Additionally, in some lessons, activities designed for pupils by staff are less engaging than others. That said, pupils are now making the progress they need to make up the ground lost prior to joining the school. This is because staff are generally adapting their teaching well. This means that pupils want to learn, even when their anxieties sometimes get in the way.

The school's work to support pupils' personal development has a high priority and is already a great strength. Despite plans to develop some aspects of this work further, massive inroads have already been made in improving pupils' attitudes to school and the world around them. This is reflected in pupils' attendance, which has become significantly better and is still improving over time.

Another key strength is that pupils are becoming more independent and enjoying opportunities to take on responsibilities, including contributing to assemblies. The school's personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme underpins much of this work. Age-appropriate relationships and sex education is bespoke and tailored to individual need. The pupils themselves acknowledge the school's positive work to help them respect and understand those from different backgrounds.

Staff enjoy working at this school. They relish the challenge each day brings. They are open and honest about what is great about the school and what could be better. They are dedicated to their work and pupils, parents and carers alike appreciate this.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

- In some curriculum subjects, the key knowledge that pupils are expected to know and remember is not as clearly sequenced as it might be. This means that staff are not always certain about the learning they need to cover so that pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding develop as well as they should over time. Work has started to address this. The school now needs to act with more urgency to ensure that staff know precisely what they need to teach, and when, across the whole curriculum.
- On occasion, staff are not as skilled at implementing the school's intended curriculum as they might be. Sometimes activity choices are not designed as well as they could be and opportunities to confirm pupils' understanding and address misconceptions are missed. The school should ensure that staff are better supported to develop this aspect of their practice.

## **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	149884
<b>DfE registration number</b>	936/6069
<b>Local authority</b>	Surrey
<b>Inspection number</b>	10322082
<b>Type of school</b>	Other Independent Special School
<b>School category</b>	Independent School
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5 to 19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	14
<b>Number of part-time pupils</b>	0
<b>Proprietor</b>	Maypole Therapeutic Education Ltd
<b>Chair</b>	Adrienne Cherrywood
<b>Principal</b>	Adrienne Cherrywood
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£60,546 to £98,976
<b>Telephone number</b>	01932 901 339
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.maypoleschool.co.uk">www.maypoleschool.co.uk</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:acherrywood@maypoleschool.co.uk">acherrywood@maypoleschool.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- This is a special school which provides for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs. All pupils who attend the school have an education, health and care plan.
- This was the first standard inspection since the school was registered in August 2023.
- Though registered for pupils in the age range from five to 19, at the time of the inspection, the school only had pupils on roll in Years 5 to 8.
- The school does not use 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 the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held a wide range of meetings with leaders at all levels, as well as teaching and support staff. The lead inspector met online with two external advisors who act as governors at the school. He met with the chair and one other director from the proprietor body. He also talked to two separate representatives of local authorities who place pupils at the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics and PSHE. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector heard some pupils read to a known adult. Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects with leaders.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of parents, 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.

- Pupils were talked to throughout the inspection to gain their views about the school. The lead inspector also talked formally to individual pupils and one representative group of pupils on day three of the inspection.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents submitted through Ofsted Parent View. The views of pupils and staff were also considered through Ofsted's surveys.

### **Inspection team**

Clive Close, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Martin Dyer

Ofsted Inspector

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