

# Inspection of Castle Garden School

Pewely Hill, Guildford GU1 3SQ

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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 **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

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

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

Pupils feel a keen sense of belonging at Castle Garden School. Staff ensure that they receive individual support to enable them to flourish. All pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and most have missed significant parts of their education before they join. Staff carefully plan transition activities to help everyone settle in quickly. Pupils achieve well because of the high expectations staff have for them.

Staff get to know pupils' needs very well. Everyone is valued as an individual. Therapists work alongside education staff to support pupils to develop their communication skills and independence. Pupils learn a variety of approaches to communicate, including using Makaton. Staff help pupils to understand the school's clear routines and expectations. This helps them to behave well so they are ready to learn. Sometimes pupils need bespoke support to manage their feelings and emotions. Staff are quick to provide individual help to pupils who need it. Disruption to learning is very uncommon.

Strong and trusting relationships are a key feature of the school. Pupils receive high-quality pastoral care. One parent, typical of many, told inspectors that the school is, 'very supportive towards families as well'. Pupils have a very optimistic outlook towards school. They feel happy and safe here. Attitudes to learning are positive. Together, staff and pupils celebrate success with joy.

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

Leaders are resolute in their ambitions for all pupils. Since opening, the school has reviewed the curriculum thoroughly. The broad curriculum is carefully matched to pupils' needs. Pupils' education, health and care (EHC) plan targets provide the starting points for teachers to adapt the curriculum. Staff use 'Individual Therapeutic and Education Plans' to identify the right steps for pupils to access learning and progress through the curriculum. Reading features prominently throughout the school day. Most staff are trained well to teach early reading using the school's chosen approach. There has been a sharp focus on improving pupils' mathematics knowledge and understanding. Pupils relish putting their new counting skills to effective use, including on visits to the local supermarket.

The school has prioritised designing the English and mathematics curriculums. Other subjects are not as fully developed. In some subjects, the school has not completed its work to identify the precise knowledge and skills that pupils will learn. In these subjects, curriculum thinking focuses too much on engaging activities, rather than what is to be learned by doing them.

All staff share the same high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Lessons are calm and purposeful. Everyone is included. Activities at breaktimes and lunchtimes are thoughtfully organised. This helps pupils to develop important social skills. Some pupils relish taking on responsibilities, such as helping to set up the hall for lunch.

Other opportunities to build pupils' character are in development, such as participating in activities which gather pupils' views. Strong attendance demonstrates how much pupils enjoy coming to school. Extensive support is provided to pupils' whose attendance falls below leaders' high expectations.

The school promotes pupils' personal development well. Opportunities to explore equality and diversity are carefully crafted into the curriculum. Pupils learn about different faiths and celebrate a wide range of religious festivals. This helps prepare pupils for life in modern Britain. The personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum is well designed. However, leaders recognise that pupils have not yet been taught sufficiently well how to keep themselves safe online.

Staff, including early career teachers, feel well supported by leaders. Everyone feels a strong sense of pride in being part of the development of the school since it opened. Leaders' skills and roles are developing. As a result, systems to measure the impact of leaders' actions are not yet fully established. Recent support from another school run by the same proprietor has brought about significant improvement to the school.

The proprietor has a secure understanding of the school's strengths and what needs to be refined. The work of proprietors and governors ensures that the school meets its statutory duties. This includes compliance with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. Systems and processes for securing improvement are rigorous. Governors recognise that they need to switch their focus to strategic oversight of the curriculum to secure further improvements. The oversight of the independent school standards requires sharpening. For example, the water in the hand washing facilities in one area of the school was too hot prior to the inspection. This was rectified while inspectors were onsite.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

### **What does the school need to do to improve?**

#### **(Information for the school and the proprietor)**

- Work to develop the curriculum in some subjects is very recent and some is yet to be completed. This means that not all staff have as much understanding of the curriculum content as they could have. The school needs to complete its work to develop the curriculum in full and ensure all staff are trained to deliver it effectively.
- Leadership roles and responsibilities are not yet as sharply defined as they could be. As a result, rigorous monitoring and evaluation of improvements are not yet in place. As the school continues to grow, the proprietor and governors should ensure that leaders are equipped with sufficient knowledge and skill to carry out their roles effectively.

- Governors have focused too much on operational aspects of leadership prior to this inspection. Consequently, they have not had sufficient strategic oversight of the school. Governors should ensure that they support the school by challenging and supporting the strategic work of leaders more robustly.

## **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>	149670
<b>DfE registration number</b>	936/6066
<b>Local authority</b>	Surrey
<b>Inspection number</b>	10322078
<b>Type of school</b>	Other Independent Special School
<b>School category</b>	Independent school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	28
<b>Number of part-time pupils</b>	0
<b>Proprietor</b>	Richard Power
<b>Chair</b>	Ciaran Walsh
<b>Headteacher</b>	Lyndsey Jeffries
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£68,000
<b>Telephone number</b>	01483 901014
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.castlegardenschool.co.uk">www.castlegardenschool.co.uk</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:info@castlegardenschool.co.uk">info@castlegardenschool.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- Castle Garden School is co-educational and caters for 28 pupils between the ages of five and 11.
- Fewer than five pupils attend early years so a specific judgement about the early years provision has not been made.
- The previous headteacher left his role in June 2024. The school is currently led by the executive headteacher (three days per week) and the deputy headteacher (full time).
- All pupils who attend the school have an EHC plan and their places are funded by the local authority.
- The school specialises in providing an education for pupils with autism. Most pupils have social, emotional and mental health needs.
- The school is in a single storey building which was formerly used as a school.
- The chair of the local governing body is also the regional director of schools within the company that runs the school.
- The school does not currently use an alternative provision.
- This was the school's first standard inspection since its pre-registration in April 2023.

## 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.

Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

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

- 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 held a range of meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders and teaching and support staff at the school. The lead inspector met with the chair of the governing body. She also spoke on the telephone with the chair of the proprietor body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: Reading and My Communication; mathematics; personal, social and health education and My Creativity. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum,

visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers and support staff, spoke to a few pupils about their learning and looked at samples of work. Inspectors also visited other lessons and looked at pupils' work from other subjects.

- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour on arrival at school and during visits to classrooms, the play area and the sensory garden.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents expressed in Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online survey for parents. Inspectors considered the views of staff during meetings with them and through the staff survey. Inspectors also considered the views of pupils through observations of their behaviour and through informal discussions with them.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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.

### **Inspection team**

Linda Culling, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Alan Johnson

Ofsted Inspector

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