

Blossom House School

Station Road, Motspur Park, New Malden KT3 6JJ

Inspection dates

11 to 13 June 2019

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
Early years provision	Outstanding
Sixth form provision	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- The headteacher, who is also the proprietor, has continued to lead the school successfully. All the independent school standards are met, and the school provides an outstanding quality of education for pupils.
- Leadership is very strong across the school. The headteacher delegates effectively. Leaders take responsibility for their areas and collaborate well for the benefit of pupils. Occasionally, leaders lack an overview of school information.
- Teachers, therapists and teaching assistants work well together to provide outstanding teaching. As a result, pupils make very strong progress from their starting points.
- Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and plan activities with thought and care. This means that teaching is finely tuned to meet the needs of individual pupils.
- Teachers use assessment to ensure pupils make their best progress. Leaders have not fully developed the process for including all of the information they hold about pupils.
- Safeguarding is effective. Systems are robust, and pupils are well cared for.
- Pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning. They develop empathy, respect and self-confidence.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. Pupils concentrate well in class and largely self-manage their behaviour around the school.
- Outcomes for pupils are outstanding. Pupils make exceptional progress in their learning and develop skills to help them live independently.
- The early years provision is outstanding. Children follow a bespoke curriculum and are well supported by adults to make very strong progress from their starting points.
- The sixth-form provision is outstanding. Partnership work between the school and local colleges enables pupils to study successfully and prepare confidently for employment and adult life.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management to ensure that:
 - leaders have an overview of information, so that they can identify broad patterns and trends to help them plan the next steps for the school.
 - leaders continue to develop the use of assessment to include a wide range of information about pupils' performance across the school.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- The headteacher, who is also the proprietor, has developed and led the school successfully from the beginning. She has appointed staff who share her ambition and determination to do their best for pupils. They work together to ensure that pupils succeed academically, socially and are well prepared for life as independent adults.
- The headteacher delegates responsibilities effectively. The capacity to maintain the schools high-quality work is strong. Leaders across the different school phases, including safeguarding, therapy and the day-to-day running of the school, are highly skilled and knowledgeable. Leaders focus on individual pupils, but they do not always have an overview of broader trends and patterns to help them focus on next steps for the school.
- Subject leaders are confident and committed leaders. They meet regularly with their teams, monitor pupils' progress and focus on professional learning. They have strong subject knowledge, and they are passionate about enabling pupils to engage in learning and make strong progress. They keep up to date with their subject curriculum and explore different forms of accreditation.
- Teachers, therapists and teaching assistants lead and contribute to teaching. Different teams work together to design and deliver learning activities for pupils. Leaders, senior leaders, therapists and members of the learning and teaching support group (LATS) observe teaching and give feedback to colleagues. This informs the LATS training schedule, where staff share excellent practice.
- The use of assessment is highly effective in ensuring that pupils make progress in their academic subjects. The system does not yet extend to other aspects of pupils' development.
- The school curriculum is broad and flexible. All the areas of learning are included. Leaders constantly review the courses they offer to ensure that they give pupils the best opportunities to learn and gain qualifications.
- Leaders ensure that the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is highly effective. This is delivered through assemblies, group time, and personal social, health and economic (PSHE) education. Pupils gain an understanding of equality and diversity in society. The taught curriculum is extended and complemented through school visits and a residential trip. This helps pupils to develop an understanding of the wider world and equip them for life after school.
- Overall, parents are very supportive of the school. One parent, typical of many, described how their child 'has been supported amazingly well and has been given the skills to succeed'.

Governance

- The advisory group supports the proprietor, and it benefits from a range of expertise from its members. The group is an informal arrangement, but it is being formally constituted as an advisory body to provide greater support, challenge and accountability. Terms of reference for the body are in place, and its first formal meeting will take place this term.

Currently, an advisory group member challenges and supports the headteacher in her role and undertakes the headteacher's appraisal.

Safeguarding

- Leaders have developed a strong culture of safeguarding. Safeguarding leaders are knowledgeable and highly credible. They analyse the local risks to pupils on the basis of evidence, and lead strong multi-agency working to counter those risks. The school has developed its own early-help model at the school to ensure that no vulnerable pupils fall through the net.
- Safer recruitment processes meet requirements. All the checks on staff are completed and recorded in line with requirements. Staff files and the single central record of staff checks are audited regularly. The safeguarding policy meets requirements and is published on the website for parents. Safeguarding is effective.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- Teachers have strong subject knowledge. Adults show pupils how to use subject-specific vocabulary when they respond to questions and discuss what they have learned. Teachers always check that pupils understand language and ideas by giving pupils time to think about and reflect on their learning.
- Teachers set high expectations and make sure pupils know the purpose of their work. They make sure that classroom routines are simple and clear. This enables pupils to gain confidence and organise themselves and their equipment.
- Teachers know their pupils very well. Their planning is highly effective, and they design learning activities and resources which are well matched to pupils' needs and interests. Teachers use a wide range of visual resources and active approaches to learning. As a result, pupils' folders show that they make strong progress over time.
- The school's use of assessment supports pupils to learn very effectively. Pupils have clear targets from their individual education plan, and for subjects.
- The school is well-resourced with specialist rooms and equipment. This has a positive impact on pupils' understanding and skills. For example, in art, pupils use a heat press to explore a range of creative effects, using their own photographs.
- Additional adults, occupational therapists, speech and language therapists and teaching assistants play a key role in lessons to ensure that pupils are challenged and supported. Therapists plan and deliver lessons that are linked to daily life skills, and this has a positive impact on pupils' personal development. Therapists use the same lesson structure so that pupils are familiar with the language of learning objectives and expectations.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils have excellent attitudes to learning. They manage and organise their subject folders well, and they take great pride in their work. Pupils are supportive of each other,

and they give and take constructive criticism. They listen and respond maturely to each other. For example, in a science class, the teacher's expert questioning prompted a discussion about the effects of human activity on climate. Pupils were confident to ask questions, challenge some of the information and put forward their own ideas.

- Pupils understand diversity and equality. They know about the protected characteristics, and they confidently discuss British values, respect, difference, and cultural and religious beliefs. They learn about this in PSHE and across subjects. For example, in English, pupils planning some autobiographical writing had considered people from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds in sports, film and politics.
- Pupils feel safe. They say there is very little, if any, bullying, and leaders' records support this. Pupils are confident that adults will support and help them if they have any concerns. Pupils learn about how to stay safe on the internet and on mobile telephones. In lessons, adults make sure that safe working practices are followed, for example wearing dust masks when using equipment in design and technology.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils behave very well in lessons. There are strong relationships between adults and pupils. Pupils concentrate on their work, listen to adults and each other, and participate fully in activities. This is because staff know pupils well, and learning activities are planned effectively. Pupils are respectful of each other in collaborative activities.
- Pupils conduct themselves well around the school, and at breaktimes and lunchtimes. Adults interact positively with pupils, for example they join in the playground games to give pupils the confidence to participate. The wide range of activities and equipment available ensures that pupils enjoy each other's company and the social time.
- Pupils are confident and mature when interacting with visitors. They were keen to talk to inspectors about their work, and to ask questions.
- Pupils self-regulate their behaviour exceptionally well. On the rare occasions where an incident happens, staff follow the policy and manage this effectively. Leaders review and evaluate systems regularly.
- Pupils' attendance is broadly in line with the national average for all schools nationally and well above the national figure for pupils with special educational needs. Attendance is rigorously followed up, and effective support enables pupils to improve their attendance.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- Pupils make outstanding progress from their starting points, across subjects and year groups. High-quality teaching and a strong focus on pupils' well-being ensures that pupils' progress is consistently strong.
- In 2018, in key stage 4, almost all pupils met or exceeded their targets. Pupils' attainment at GCSE in art, graphics, photography and English were particularly strong. Pupils succeed in a wide variety of accredited qualifications.

- Pupils' folders show that they make strong progress. In English, pupils across key stages can write in a range of genres, including poetry, diary entries, letters and analysis of plot and character.
- Pupils enjoy reading and make strong progress. There is a joined-up approach to teaching reading, which is supported by group leaders, therapists and subject staff. Pupils concentrate well and experience reading in a range of formats.
- Pupils make strong progress in mathematics. All year groups study a wide range of mathematical topics. This includes learning about shape and space, problem-solving, algebra and interpreting data. Pupils can apply their mathematical skills effectively, for example in design and technology to make measurements for their furniture item.
- The most able pupils make strong progress. Individual subject targets for pupils ensure that the level of challenge is appropriate. Teachers are skilled in identifying the planning and support pupils require to build on their knowledge skills and conceptual development. In 2018, some pupils attained the highest grades available at GCSE in mathematics and the arts subjects.
- Pupils' outcomes in developing independence and preparing for their transition into the sixth form are equally strong. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Early years provision

Outstanding

- Leaders have ensured that all the requirements of the statutory framework are met. Leaders plan the curriculum well, and all adults have high expectations. This enables children to make excellent progress from their starting points.
- Children are well supported and prepared for the transition to Year 2. Staff use assessment to ensure that activities are planned effectively. Children follow a bespoke curriculum, and staff focus their support and resources on the needs of the child. Children have time to consolidate their learning and develop independence before moving on to new work.
- Safeguarding is effective. Pupils' safety and welfare is a priority for leaders, and adults are well aware of risk. They record and monitor concerns in line with safeguarding procedures. Safeguarding records are well documented.
- Adults are strong role models for children. As a result, children develop respect for each other. They learn to play together, share toys and take turns in activities. Staff are skilled in interacting with children. They use questions and conversations alongside children's play in order to develop their language and understanding.
- Children's learning journals show that they make excellent progress from their starting points, in all areas of learning.
- Leaders engage parents effectively. Parents have opportunities to visit the provision every day. Leaders develop strong links and consistent approaches to learning between home and school. There is a regular newsletter, which, for example, gives information about how to sound out letters.

Sixth form provision

Outstanding

- Leadership of the sixth-form provision is excellent. All staff are clear about their role and staff teams collaborate well to provide the best possible experience for students. Leaders have driven forward improvement year-on-year, for example to establish the transition year for year 12 and develop productive partnerships with local colleges. Leaders plan, manage and evaluate students' programmes of study, so that students build on qualifications which interest them and enable them to succeed.
- Students achieve well because they receive excellent support from school staff, including therapists and learning mentors. Some school staff are based in the colleges, so they are always available. Students travel independently to and from school and college. This prepares them well for life. The highly effective liaison between the college and the school enables students to access and complete a range of courses and levels of accreditation.
- Safeguarding in the sixth form is effective. Safeguarding leaders work closely with colleges and school staff based in college, and they make sure students are safe. They promptly follow up on any absence of students.
- Students' academic programme is complemented by a diverse enrichment programme. This includes a residential camping trip, clubs, and support in the community, such as through volunteering. These activities develop students' self-confidence, health, and living skills. The treasure hunt around central London develops and celebrates students' independent travel skills. Students are resilient and resourceful learners. Many activities are accredited, for example through the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme.
- Students have excellent opportunities to learn and apply their employability skills. All students gain accreditation in work skills. They have practice interviews through a local job centre, and they all undertake a work experience placements. Students also work in the café and the food trailer.
- All students go into education, employment or training. A high proportion stay on in the colleges or transfer to new providers to study a range of courses. This includes courses at level 3 and degree level.

School details

Unique reference number	102694
DfE registration number	315/6076
Inspection number	10092458

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	3 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	252
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	43
Number of part-time pupils	10
Proprietor	Joanna Burgess
Headteacher	Joanna Burgess
Annual fees (day pupils)	£38,250–£44,550
Telephone number	020 8946 7348
Website	www.blossomhouseschool.co.uk
Email address	admin@blossomhouseschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	6 to 8 December 2016

Information about this school

- Blossom House School is an independent special school for girls and boys in the London Borough of Merton. The school is registered for up to 330 pupils between the ages of three to 19. There are currently 252 pupils on roll.
- The school operates on two sites. The main site covers the whole age range and is at Station Road, Motspur Park, New Malden, and 230 pupils attend this site. The other site, for early years children and primary pupils, is near Euston, in the London Borough of

Camden, at St Christopher's Place NW1 1JF, and 22 pupils attend this site. The school makes use of local parks for additional outdoor space.

- The early years provision includes Year 1.
- All sixth-form students attend Blossom House, Motspur Park. Students enrolled on the transition year attend college for a half-day a week and study a range of courses at Blossom House School. Other students study for two and a half days a week at college, and two and a half days at school. The colleges are North East Surrey College of Technology (NESCOT), Merton College and Kingston College.
- The school has purchased the lease of a local café. The café also has a food trailer, which attends local events. These provide work experience opportunities for pupils in key stage 4 and in the sixth form.
- Since the last inspection, the proprietor and the advisory group have put plans in place to change the group into an advisory board. Terms of reference are in place, and the board has its first meeting in June 2019.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out at the request of the Department for Education (DfE), the registration authority for independent schools. The purpose of the inspection was to evaluate the school provision against all the independent school standards.
- The school was previously inspected in December 2016, when it was judged to be outstanding.
- Inspectors visited lessons across year groups. All these visits were made jointly with school senior leaders. Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work in their folders.
- An inspector visited the college link programme at NESCOL and Kingston College to talk to students, scrutinise their folders of work and talk to sixth-form leaders and Blossom House staff, based at the colleges.
- Meetings were held with leaders, including the headteacher/proprietor, other senior leaders, subject leaders and leaders of the safeguarding, therapy and behaviour teams.
- A telephone conversation was held with a member of the advisory group.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents from the 69 responses to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View, and phone calls from parents.
- Inspectors considered the 137 responses to the Ofsted staff survey.
- Inspectors talked to pupils in lessons and at breaktime. Inspectors met with groups of pupils and students from the primary, secondary and post-16 phases. There were no responses to the online Ofsted pupils' survey.
- Inspectors scrutinised documentation, including records relating to safeguarding, health and safety, the curriculum, teaching, and pupils' attendance and behaviour.

Inspection team

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