Inspection of an outstanding school: Fordway Centre

Southway, Guildford GU2 8AA

Inspection dates: 1 and 2 May 2024

Outcome

Fordway Centre continues to be an outstanding school.

The head of school of this school is Linda Whitehorn. This school is part of Inclusive Education Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), David Euridge, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Ronald Searle. There is also a director of education, Amy Smith, who is responsible for this school and two others.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive at this nurturing school. They are happy and calm and are fully engaged learners. Most pupils will only attend the school for a short period of time. Their planned fixed-term programme is based on the level of support they require to be ready to move back to a permanent school placement. Staff rapidly build highly effective and trusting relationships with pupils. As soon as a pupil joins the school, staff develop an in-depth understanding of how to help them. As a result, from the very start of their time here, pupils receive highly personalised and expert support for their complex special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Pupils feel safe and listened to. There are extremely high levels of mutual respect between pupils and staff. Therefore, pupils trust that adults in this school will keep them safe and do what is best for them. Pupils are proud to meet the high expectations for conduct and learning.

Social times are joyful times, during which staff provide pupils with a range of activities that match their interests. Pupils of all ages play together with kindness and compassion. Older pupils proudly act as positive role models and mentors to younger pupils.

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

The school's curriculum is highly ambitious. The curriculum has been carefully considered to set out the knowledge pupils need to learn. It contains skilfully constructed sequences of learning that match pupils' needs exceptionally well.

The school's robust communication system with home schools and previous settings means that staff have important information about pupils. They use this, as well as information from checks they make when pupils arrive, to make precise changes to their curriculum for each pupil. Lessons and activities are expertly planned by knowledgeable teachers. They not only rapidly fill gaps in knowledge pupils may have, but also build on their learning well. Pupils' achievement is excellent.

When pupils start here, the school quickly finds out how well they can read. The information gathered about each pupil gives staff clarity on how to support those who have fallen behind with their reading. Staff put in place highly effective extra activities that help pupils to become confident and enthusiastic readers. As a result, pupils learn to read very well here.

Behaviour support is an integral part of this school's curriculum. On arrival, pupils take part in an induction programme, which allows staff to build a SEND profile for each pupil. Highly appropriate short-term targets are set for pupils. Staff work on these one-to-one with pupils every day. In addition, pupils all take part in a programme to help them develop emotional regulation strategies. Subsequently, pupils learn to identify their emotions and regulate them well. This contributes to the calm and purposeful culture that pervades this school. Pupils' behaviour is consistently focused and engaged. They relish their learning and respect the right of others to learn as well. Due to this, low-level disruption is extremely rare.

The school runs extremely well-designed activities to develop crucial life skills for pupils. Through a range of activities, such as visits to public places and meal planning trips, pupils learn how to be part of the local community positively and safely. This is part of the school's focused work to ensure pupils are ready for the next stage in their lives. Through enrichment days and trips, pupils learn about different cultures and religions. The school's personal, social, health and economic education curriculum also teaches pupils about different communities in society. Pupils securely understand the concept of difference and are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

All staff are immensely positive and proud to work at this school. They are a close-knit team who support each other with compassion. Staff know that leaders value them and have their best interests at heart. The whole team works together exceptionally well with a shared determination to support pupils to achieve their best.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Background

When we have judged a school to be outstanding, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. 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 would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which 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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Fordway Centre, to be outstanding in June 2016.

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	148123
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	10322053
Type of school	Alternative provision
School category	Academy alternative provision converter
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	14
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Ronald Searle
CEO of the trust	David Euridge
Headteacher	Amy Smith (Director of education) Linda Whitehorn (Head of school)
Website	fordway-centre.co.uk
Date(s) of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Fordway Centre is part of the Inclusive Education Trust. The school is overseen by a director of education, who also leads two other alternative provisions as part of the trust.
- Fordway Centre is an academy alternative provision for pupils who have been permanently excluded from other schools or are at high risk of exclusion. It provides short-term placements and also supports local schools with an outreach provision.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.
- Fordway Centre converted to become an academy school in September 2021. When its predecessor school, Fordway Centre, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be outstanding overall.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this ungraded inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

- 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 have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors met with the director of education, the head of school and other members of the leadership team. They also met with the chair of the governing body.
- The lead inspector also met with the CEO of the trust and the chair of the board of trustees.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: reading, mathematics and humanities. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector also discussed the wider curriculum offer for pupils with school leaders and looked at further examples of pupils' work.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour around the school and in lessons. They also spoke to pupils in lessons and during playtimes and lunchtimes.
- The inspectors considered a range of documents, including leaders' evaluations of the school, their school improvement plan, and minutes from governor and trustee meetings.
- The inspectors considered parents' responses to Ofsted Parent View.
- The inspectors took account of the views of staff through conversations and the responses to the online staff survey.
- 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.

Nina Marabese, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Caroline Clarke	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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