Inspection of an outstanding school: Wey Valley College

Southway, Guildford, Surrey GU2 8AA

Inspection dates: 19 and 20 June 2024

Outcome

Wey Valley College continues to be an outstanding school.

The head of school is Simon Whittington. 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 for two others in the trust.

What is it like to attend this school?

Wey Valley College changes lives. Pupils flourish in the school's safe, nurturing environment. They want to do well and are eager to please, despite the difficulties they have faced in the past and their anxiety when they first arrive. The school gives pupils the care, support and space to do just that. Pupils have often had a turbulent time in education before joining the school, including, in some cases, permanent exclusion. They speak perceptively about how the school has helped them, saying, 'They understand me', 'They listen', and 'They give me the time I need.'

The school has a calm and friendly atmosphere. Pupils respond very well to consistently high expectations of their learning and behaviour. They treat adults and each other with respect and follow the rules most of the time.

Staff support pupils with care, good humour and a commitment to helping each to do well. Pupils feel comfortable and valued as a result. They discover new interests, gain valuable qualifications and are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage of education or for future employment. Well-established and thorough procedures provide highly effective support for pupils when the time comes to leave. Pupils do so with renewed self-belief and plans for the future.

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

Leaders and staff share a strong commitment to helping pupils to get back on track and achieve well after a disrupted education. Staff work closely with pupils and parents from the very start to identify the best way forward and to formulate a plan of action for the

future. Strong staff morale and effective teamwork contribute to the school's warm and buoyant atmosphere.

Pupils thrive in this school. Extremely well-established procedures ensure strong support for them when they join and leave the school. There are significant improvements in individual pupils' attendance from the time they join Wey Valley.

Staff establish strong relationships with pupils. They understand pupils' needs and help them to learn how to manage anxieties and frustrations with great skill. Pupils behave well as a result. The school follows very clear procedures for identifying pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The school works constructively with agencies, including the local authority, to ensure that pupils with SEND are extremely well supported. Parents have nothing but praise for the staff team.

The school's curriculum is expertly planned to equip pupils with important knowledge and skills in interesting and meaningful ways. Pupils have regular opportunities to use and practise what they have learned in different subjects so that learning is purposeful and is continuously assessed and reinforced. The older pupils choose from a range of vocational subjects, such as construction, food technology, music and art, as well as English and mathematics. They achieve very well in a range of nationally accredited qualifications, including GCSEs.

All pupils are placed in the school on a short-term basis, although some stay longer so that they can take examinations before moving on to colleges, apprenticeships or employment. Pupils in the younger year groups either return to mainstream education or move into specialist provision when they leave Wey Valley. The school's curriculum provides a wide range of high-quality activities and experiences to enliven learning, build cultural capital and support pupils' personal development. The school's careers programme is an important and impressive element of the school's work and starts from the moment pupils join the school. All Year 11 pupils have a careers plan and are clear about their ambitious next steps.

Reading is given a high priority. The school is extremely successful in identifying and closing gaps in pupils' reading skills and in building on what pupils have learned previously. Staff use a range of strategies to ensure that pupils develop secure reading skills, including a highly effective phonics programme and regular opportunities to read.

Leaders carry out their delegated roles and responsibilities to the highest standards. They have established rigorous and reliable systems to monitor the effectiveness of the school's work and to identify next steps in the school's development.

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, Wey Valley College, to be outstanding in September 2018.

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	148124
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	10322054
Type of school	Alternative provision
School category	Academy alternative provision converter
Age range of pupils	5 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	48
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Ronald Searle
CEO of the trust	David Euridge
Headteacher	Amy Smith (director of education) Simon Whittington (head of school)
Website	www.wvc.surrey.sch.uk
Date(s) of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Wey Valley College 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.
- Wey Valley College 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.
- Wey Valley College converted to become an academy school in September 2021. When its predecessor school, Wey Valley College, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be outstanding overall.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

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 leaders 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 senior leaders. The lead inspector also met with the CEO of the trust, the chair of trustees and two members of the local governing board, including the chair of governors.
- Inspectors spoke with a range of staff at different times during the inspection. They also considered the views of staff expressed in Ofsted's survey.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and vocational studies, such as food technology and construction. Deep dives included visits to lessons, a review of pupils' work, and discussions with leaders, teachers and pupils.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils in lessons and at other times of the school day. They gathered parents' views through Ofsted's survey.
- 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

Julie Sackett, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Marian Feeley	His Majesty's Inspector

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