

Inspection of More House School

Moons Hill, Frensham, Farnham, Surrey GU10 3AP

Inspection dates: 7 to 9 March 2023

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Sixth-form provision

Outstanding

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Outstanding

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

Yes

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a school where high ambitions underpin every aspect of day-to-day life. Staff do not let the barriers pupils face get in the way of what they teach. Expectations are high. Pupils respond well to the challenges they are set because their needs are understood and the support they receive is highly effective.

Pupils conduct themselves well here, though recognise that behaviour is not perfect all the time. Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe in school, including from bullying, because staff are quick to act when there are problems. Pupils have a range of special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and staff are skilled when managing heightened anxieties. One pupil said that he had 'learned how to learn' since joining the school, because staff give him good strategies to help.

One pupil described the school's extra-curricular offer as 'insane'. Inspectors found it extremely rich in variety and high in quality. Sport, technology, music and the arts are valued highly here. The lead inspector enjoyed a performance by the school's big band during the inspection. Pupils love the magic club, run by a professional magician. Others enjoy drama, and are hoping to register for the Edinburgh Fringe this year.

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

The school has been rated outstanding for some time, yet has not stood still in its ambition to evolve and to improve. Its curriculum has great breadth. Students in the sixth form access a wide range of subjects. The curriculum is further strengthened by the school's excellent range of accommodation and teaching resources. Specialist equipment enables staff to deliver high-quality lessons both in and out of the classroom. Music, the visual arts, science, technology, and the physical education departments enjoy facilities that both enthuse and motivate pupils to learn, even before they set foot in a classroom. The core subjects of English and mathematics are taught with vigour and passion. Pupils who struggle to read are supported well by staff, including specialists from the school's learning development centre, known by all as the LDC.

Younger pupils follow a pathway reaching well beyond that which might normally be expected. All pupils in the school's junior phase are taught to play a musical instrument. Many keep this up and are performing to a high standard by the time they reach the sixth form. Older pupils enjoy a varied choice of subjects as they move through the school. These are both academic and vocational in nature, preparing pupils well for their next steps in education and life beyond More House.

The school benefits from highly dedicated, specialist staff who understand pupils' emotional needs as well as being enthusiastic advocates for the subjects that they teach. Staff value the support they get from leaders. Classroom visits showed staff to be experts in the way they design and promote learning. Small class sizes help, and much of the teaching here is truly bespoke to individual pupils. The impact of

this is clear to see in the outcomes at the end of key stages 4 and 5. More than half of the 39 students who left the sixth form last year gained university places. Others moved to apprenticeships or further education, or directly into employment.

One unique aspect of the school is the time pupils spend supported by staff from the LDC. Much of this work is aimed at helping pupils to overcome the language and communication hurdles they face. Speech and language and occupational therapists play their part. Literacy tutors are also crucial to the work of the LDC. All pupils access this specialist provision, which offers them expert additional support across the full scope of the curriculum. The result of this manifests itself across all areas of the school, boosting pupils' confidence and belief in themselves as learners.

The curriculum offer here extends well beyond the academic. Pupils access a wide range of extra-curricular activities, both as part of the planned curriculum and through their own choices linked to personal interests. Team games and singing, performing both on stage and in musical ensembles, are daily occurrences. After-school clubs broaden pupils' horizons, help develop their sense of resilience and build character. Pupils are equally at home talking about karate as they are about cooking or achieving formal qualifications in life skills.

The school's personal and social development programme is a strength. This incorporates all aspects of personal, social and health education, including relationships and sex education. Leaders are very aware of their responsibilities to ensure that pupils learn about equality and diversity. Aspects such as making a positive contribution to wider society or understanding the concept of consent are all given a high priority. Pupils also benefit from a well-planned careers information and guidance programme. As a result, pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain as well as their next steps in education, employment or training.

Governance is well established. Directors, who form the governing body, come from a range of backgrounds. Their varying skills and experience mean that they are well set to offer the challenge and support leaders' need to run the school successfully. This includes oversight of aspects such as the welfare and health and safety of pupils, staff and visitors to the school. Their input ensures that the school complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and all relevant independent school standards.

The large majority of parents who replied to Ofsted Parent View are supportive of the school and its leadership. Most free-text comments were extremely positive. Comments that expressed sentiments such as 'The school is fantastic and has been a life saver for my son' and 'I thank God for this school. They are doing wonderful work for my son. I am very grateful' were not uncommon.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The culture to safeguard pupils is strong here. Expert staff who lead the school's work in this area are knowledgeable about the potential dangers pupils face. They ensure that teaching and support staff understand their roles fully in the school's work to protect pupils.

Senior leaders and directors oversee the school's safeguarding arrangements diligently. Policies are fit for purpose and understood by all. Systems to recruit staff follow relevant guidance. Timely work with outside agencies to support pupils and their families plays a big part in ensuring that the welfare and health and safety of all at the school are protected.

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

Unique reference number	125403
DfE registration number	936/6420
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	10267610
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent residential special school
Age range of pupils	8 to 19
Gender of pupils	Boys
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	474
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	80
Number of part-time pupils	None
Proprietor	Gard'ner Memorial Limited (The)
Chair	Glenn Handley
Headteacher	Jonathan Hetherington
Annual fees (day pupils)	£14,793 to £20,736
Telephone number	01252 792 303
Website	www.morehouseschool.co.uk
Email address	schooloffice@morehouseschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	5 to 7 March 2019

Information about this school

- More House School is an independent residential special school owned by Gard'ner Memorial Limited. The school has charitable status. It is governed by the board of directors, whose members also act as governors for the school.
- The school provides education for pupils who have language and communication needs as well as other needs associated with autism spectrum disorder.
- Over half of pupils have an education, health and care plan and are funded by their local authority.
- The school has a Catholic ethos.
- The school does not use any alternative education providers.

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.

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 wide range of meetings with the headmaster, senior leaders, curriculum leaders and teaching and support staff.
- The lead inspector met with the chair of the governing body, who was accompanied by three other governors.
- An inspector held telephone conversations with officers from two local authorities who place pupils at the school.
- Inspectors talked informally and formally to different groups and individual pupils to gain their views about the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, music, visual arts and technology. Deep dives included visiting lessons, looking at pupils' work, and talking to leaders, teachers and pupils about how teaching in these subjects builds on pupils' knowledge over time.
- Inspectors toured the school's premises and accommodation. They checked a range of policies and documents, including the school's single central record. They also reviewed the school's website and other records regarding the welfare and health and safety of pupils and staff, linked to the independent school standards.

- Inspectors gathered evidence to explore the impact of pupils' behaviour, the school's wider curriculum offer and how leaders support staff with their workload.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents submitted through Ofsted's parent survey. Ofsted's surveys for staff and for pupils were also considered.

Inspection team

Clive Close, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Alan Johnson

Ofsted Inspector

Jo Petch

His Majesty's Inspector

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