

Inspection of Unsted Park School

Munstead Heath Road, Godalming, Surrey GU7 1UW

Inspection dates: 23 to 25 September 2025

Overall effectiveness

Good

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Good

Sixth-form provision

Outstanding

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Requires improvement

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

Yes

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive at Unsted Park School. They benefit from calm routines and the warm, welcoming approach of staff each morning. All pupils have education, health and care (EHC) plans. Staff work with determination to support every pupil's development towards achieving their targets. The curriculum is carefully designed to ensure ambition for all, offering academic and vocational courses that lead to recognised qualifications. Older pupils, including those in the sixth form, achieve highly and are well prepared for their next steps.

Behaviour across the school is exemplary. Staff work closely together to provide timely and effective support. A strong pastoral system underpins pupils' personal and social development, which is prioritised throughout the school. Pupils feel safe and confident to raise concerns, including about bullying, often using the school's electronic QR code system to communicate their worries.

Pupils take pride in shaping their school community. Leadership roles such as school council, 'eco leaders' and 'lab leaders' promote responsibility and inclusion. These roles are accessed through a formal application process and help pupils lead initiatives that improve their school. A wide range of clubs enriches the school day, including photography, arts and crafts, and LGBTQ+ well-being.

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

Since the previous inspection, the leadership team has taken decisive steps to drive improvement. The school has prioritised curriculum development, ensuring that from key stage 2 onwards, it now closely aligns with the national curriculum. Leaders have precisely identified and sequenced the knowledge pupils are to learn. This enables older pupils to access appropriate academic qualifications. In addition, vocational pathways offer relevant and accessible qualifications for all pupils. While these developments are promising, some aspects of the revised curriculum for younger pupils are still at an early stage of implementation.

The school's broad and balanced curriculum is thoughtfully tailored to meet pupils' individual needs. Teachers effectively use pupils' EHC plan targets to inform curriculum planning and delivery. In key stage 4 and the sixth form, staff demonstrate expert subject knowledge and use a wide range of effective strategies to identify and address gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills. As a result, learning is highly personalised and pupils achieve very well across their programmes of study. In the younger year groups, the curriculum is well designed and increasingly responsive to pupils' needs. However, some aspects have been introduced more recently. Staff confidence in delivering newer content is still developing. Teaching in these year groups is generally effective. Nonetheless, explanations are occasionally less precise and ongoing assessment is not yet consistently used to identify gaps in understanding. Consequently, while pupils achieve well, not enough reach the high standards seen in the older year groups.

Developing pupils' reading skills is a key focus of the school's curriculum. Leaders have successfully fostered a love of reading. This is supported by a well-stocked library that pupils use regularly during their free time. Staff deliver structured early reading and catch-up phonics programmes for those pupils who need it. These ensure pupils who struggle with reading receive targeted support. Pupils have access to suitable reading materials throughout the day. These approaches are especially effective in key stage 3. Reading fluency is improving among pupils in this phase. This gives them better access to the wider curriculum and pupils are growing in confidence and achieving greater success.

The school's provision for personal development is exceptional. Staff deliver effective programmes that meet pupils' social and emotional needs precisely. The therapeutic teams provide expert support, building pupils' resilience and fostering strong, respectful relationships. Individualised plans, co-produced with families, identify triggers and outline clear, proactive strategies to help pupils to reduce their anxieties. Pupils feel safe and trust staff to respond consistently and supportively. Behaviour is managed with care and dignity, promoting self-regulation and emotional security. The school's values of 'Respect, Believe, Succeed' are deeply embedded and consistently modelled. Pupils show excellent character, perseverance and motivation, especially when tackling demanding tasks. They are well prepared for future learning and life.

Some pupils join with a history of very low attendance. Where concerns persist, leaders take tenacious and well-considered action. Learning programmes are adapted to meet individual needs. As a result, most pupils improve attendance significantly and benefit fully from the school's provision.

The school prepares pupils exceptionally well for life in modern Britain. Personal, social and health education (PSHE) lessons are engaging and relevant. Pupils learn to value diversity and develop essential life skills through a well-structured curriculum and enrichment opportunities. This is enhanced by visits to places such as art galleries and places of worship. The pupil-led 'rights respecting committee' helps pupils understand their rights and responsibilities. These experiences promote respect, tolerance and active citizenship.

Pupils and sixth-form students benefit from a well-structured careers programme tailored to their needs and aspirations. They receive clear, relevant information about future pathways, including university, college placements and apprenticeships. Pupils explore a wide range of career options and are supported in researching what suits them best. As a result, they are very well prepared for their next steps.

The proprietor shares the school's high expectations for pupils and holds leaders to account effectively. This includes ensuring compliance with Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 as well the independent schools standards. Staff are proud to work at this inclusive school. They are highly positive about their roles and the school's culture. Staff value the wide range of training opportunities available. They appreciate the support they receive for their well-being and workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- For younger pupils, the quality of implementation of the curriculum is variable due to ongoing enhancements to some subjects. As a result, some pupils do not achieve as well as they could in these areas. The school should continue to prioritise staff development to address these inconsistencies, leading to sustained improvements in both curriculum delivery and pupil outcomes.

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	135419
DfE registration number	936/6592
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	10391744
Type of school	Other Independent Special School
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	7 to 20
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	92
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	15
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Aspris Children's Services Ltd
Chair	Nancy O'Regan
Headteacher	Shane Kenny
Annual fees (day pupils)	£81,566 - £124,140
Telephone number	014 8389 2061
Website	www.aspris.com/unsted-park-school
Email address	unstedparkschool@aspriscs.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	7 to 9 November 2023

Information about this school

- Unsted Park is an independent special school for pupils with a diagnosis of autism. The school is registered to admit up to 112 pupils between the ages 7 and 20. The school's address is Munstead Heath Road, Godalming, Surrey GU7 1UW.
- The school's sixth form currently has 15 students on roll.
- Many pupils have experienced significant difficulties and disruption to their education prior to starting this school. They all have an EHC plan with their places funded by a local authority.
- The school currently uses three unregistered 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.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued 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 and staff in the school. They met with a representative of the proprietor, the proprietor central team and members of the therapeutic team.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: mathematics; English, including early reading, and PSHE and art. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans and spoke to leaders about some other subjects.
- The lead inspector toured the premises to check the school's compliance with the independent school standards.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour throughout the inspection.
- 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.
- Inspectors reviewed the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including any free-text comments.

Inspection team

Laura James, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Toby Martlew

His Majesty's Inspector

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