Inspection of a good school: Carwarden House Community School

118 Upper Chobham Road, Camberley, Surrey GU15 1EJ

Inspection dates: 13 and 14 March 2023

Outcome

Carwarden House Community School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils love this school and its community feel. The strong relationships pupils have with staff make them feel happy and safe. When asked what the best thing about the school is, one pupil reflected the views of many, telling the lead inspector, 'The staff are very nice to us.' Staff help pupils to improve their social skills, teaching them how to interact with others. Consequently, pupils develop positive friendships. They rarely use repeated, unkind language towards each other, but staff are adept at tackling this quickly when it happens.

High expectations of pupils' learning and behaviour permeate Carwarden House. Pupils behave well. There are no barriers to what staff expect pupils to achieve. Staff are relentless in their pursuit to ensure that all pupils enter further education, training or employment, and become successful, happy and independent young adults. Pupils' individual needs are met well.

Pupils benefit from the different experiences they have. The school council offers purposeful leadership opportunities. Many older pupils love the chance they have to do work experience and attend college as part of their educational offer. For example, some pupils are working in hotels, supermarkets and food outlets. Others are following courses in hair and beauty, and engineering at a local college.

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

Leaders have prioritised curriculum developments in the last few years. They have ensured that the curriculum is right for their pupils and that it gives them the knowledge and skills that they will need to be prepared for the future. Functional literacy and numeracy skills are a fundamental part of pupils' curriculum. Staff identify pupils who struggle to read as quickly as possible. They use a phonics scheme to plug the gaps. This helps pupils to understand their learning in all their subjects. Pupils have plenty of opportunities to develop their reading skills and many confidently read aloud in lessons.

Adults read to pupils with enthusiasm and excitement. The range of books that pupils explore is constantly growing.

Pupils are taught an ambitious and well-planned curriculum as they move through the different year groups, including in the sixth form. Leaders have identified the specific knowledge and skills that they want pupils to learn across different subjects. Leaders have broken this content down into smaller, more manageable chunks, which helps pupils to remember the most important things.

Teachers are skilled in explaining new learning to pupils and they use effective examples that help pupils to understand. Teachers ask pupils lots of questions to check that they have grasped what they are learning. Pupils benefit socially and emotionally from the opportunities to work in pairs or small groups and they learn to give their views and opinions to the rest of the class. In a small number of subjects, the teaching materials teachers select are not always successful in helping pupils to achieve the aims of the curriculum as effectively as they could. This variability is not routinely identified by leaders who monitor the subjects.

Pupils have learned good habits. The community charter sets out the specific expectations of everyone in the school. Behaving well in class and at social times is the norm. Sixth-form students set a good example for younger pupils. Pupils have very positive attitudes to their learning. They listen carefully to their teachers and to other pupils when they are speaking. They show kindness and respect. On the rare occasions that pupils do not meet the school's high expectations, staff are expert in dealing with these situations.

Ample opportunities support pupils' wider personal development. Regular trips build their independence and confidence and help them to improve their social skills. Trips to the local supermarkets, cinemas and theme parks along with other places in the local community strongly support pupils' understanding of the world around them. The personal development provision is well organised and gives pupils the important messages that they need as they move through their teenage years.

Leaders support staff with their workload and well-being. Staff recognise that there is a lot to do to meet the needs of their pupils, but are positive about the impact their roles have. Some staffing changes have led to increased workload; however, leaders are taking swift action to remedy this.

Trustees have clear roles and are focused on the right priorities to support the school's further development. They have access to as much information as possible about the school. Regular visits and discussions with staff and pupils help them to challenge and support leaders in equal measure.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders, staff and trustees are well trained in all aspects of safeguarding. They are alert to the different risks their pupils face. They recognise the additional vulnerability of the

pupils they work with. Well-established systems and processes are in place to ensure that staff can report any concerns in a timely manner. The safeguarding team has an organised approach to the way it responds. Leaders work closely with other agencies to make sure that pupils are well supported. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe. They have a good understanding of what to do if they ever find themselves in risky situations.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of subjects, the implementation of the curriculum is not consistently or closely matched with the intended curriculum. The teaching materials that teachers select are not always successful in helping pupils to achieve the aims of the curriculum as effectively as they could. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum is implemented consistently well across all subjects.
- Middle leaders do not monitor the implementation of the curriculum well enough. This means that some of them have not identified the variability in how well the curriculum is delivered. Leaders should ensure that middle leaders monitor the curriculum more effectively.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. 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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Carwarden House Community School, to be good in January 2014.

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' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	141147
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	10241904
Type of school	Special
School category	Academy special converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	155
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	37
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Christopher Hamilton
Headteacher	Tim Stokes
Website	www.carwarden.surrey.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	27 June 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Carwarden House Community School is the only school in Iris Academies Trust.
- All pupils who attend the school have complex learning and additional needs. All pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- The headteacher took up his role shortly after the last inspection.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, computing and personal development. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum, visited lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors visited a range of other lessons during the inspection to explore how the curriculum is implemented.
- Inspectors met with senior leaders, staff, pupils and those with responsibility for governance, including the chair of trustees and three other trustees.
- Inspectors met with a group of staff to explore staff workload and well-being.
- Inspectors scrutinised behaviour, bullying and discriminatory language records.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the confidential staff survey. They took account of the responses to the Ofsted Parent View questionnaire and comments made by those who responded.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors viewed the school's website and policies, met with the safeguarding team and spoke with pupils and staff. They scrutinised school records of the safeguarding checks carried out on adults working at the school and spoke with governors. They scrutinised child protection records.

Inspection team

Shaun Jarvis, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Linda Jacobs	Ofsted Inspector

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