

Inspection of Tadley Court School

Tadley Common Road, Tadley, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG26 3TB

Inspection dates: 22 to 24 November 2022

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Sixth-form provision **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Good

Does the school meet the independent school standards? **Yes**

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud of their school. They feel that their voice is heard because staff listen and are 'very patient' with them. Many pupils have a keen sense of humour, which they are not afraid to share with visitors once they get to know them. Older students are happy to apologise when they know they have said or done something wrong. Pupils generally behave well, although readily admit that they sometimes 'flip out' when they are feeling anxious.

Staff, including the therapy team, are similarly proud of the school. They form strong bonds with pupils. Staff work together well as a multi-disciplinary team both in and out of classrooms. This impacts positively on pupils and ensures that their social and emotional development is given a high priority. Communication across the school is strong, although some parents feel that this could be better.

Pupils say that they feel safe in school. They feel that it is a friendly place. All who replied to the pupil survey report that they feel safe from bullying. This was also confirmed in discussions with different groups of pupils, who also shared that they like certain subjects, but want to do more music and art.

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

This is a good school which has many strengths. Leaders, including those in positions of governance, understand what is working well and what could be better. They recognise that the school is evolving. Where in the past, pupils typically joined the school during key stages 3 and 4, the school now has a firmly established and growing primary phase. This is seen as a positive development because pupils who attend the school for longer periods of time are more settled and often achieve more. In light of this, leaders acknowledge that the school's wider curriculum now needs to be developed further.

Additional leadership positions have been created by the proprietor recently. These have given the senior management team extra capacity to build on the good quality of provision the school provides. This includes in leadership of the curriculum and in ensuring that the welfare, health and safety of pupils and staff are given the highest priority. A new head of the post-14 phase and a deputy headteacher with oversight of the quality of education are now in place. The special educational needs coordinator joined the school recently and is beginning to have a positive impact as a strong advocate for both pupils and their families.

The school provides two distinct curriculum pathways for pupils. One is more academic in nature. Both pathways develop pupils' personal development equally well. This is also true for students in the sixth form, which is part of the school's distinctive post-14 phase. A specially adapted scheme of work supports pupils' personal, social and health education successfully. Pupils learn about aspects such as equalities and relationships in well-planned sessions that are both age appropriate and personalised.

Classes are small. Pupils who are pre- or non-verbal are supported successfully by specialist staff. Classroom visits revealed members of the therapy team working hand in hand with teachers and learning support assistants. Pupils' communication skills and physical development are supported well because of this. Additionally, teaching staff are gaining a more rounded understanding of both the rationale and the impact of the therapy team's input, leading to better outcomes for pupils.

Pupils enjoy their mathematics and English lessons which broadly match the requirements of the national curriculum. The school's work to teach pupils to read is closely aligned to a commercially available synthetic phonics programme. This is overseen and delivered by experienced and competent staff. One older pupil read enthusiastically while the lead inspector was present, his rapid progress over the last year spilling over into obvious pride and gleeful interactions with staff. Because of the expertise of staff, pupils enjoy learning to read. However, despite the good work in supporting pupils to learn to read fluently, the school's library is under used, and not all pupils are as inspired to read as much as they might be.

Staff understand the needs of pupils well. They are successful at designing learning tailored to each individual. Careers information is available. Students who leave the sixth form often access college places. However, more needs to be done to ensure that pupils access high-quality careers advice and work experience opportunities so that they are better prepared for adulthood and life after school.

Pupils on each of the curriculum pathways access learning at their own level. Staff try hard to plan lessons that are meaningful and relevant. Much of their teaching focuses on aspects that link learning to real life. Where possible, this is supported by trips into the local area. Pupils also enjoy trips wider afield linked to their studies. During the inspection, pupils were excited about their trip to the swimming pool and looking forward to singing carols in the local library. A younger pupil also shared how much she enjoyed her trips to a nearby supermarket, although reflected that building a new supermarket in the school's grounds would be a much better idea, saving the walk, which she did not enjoy so much.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff work hard to ensure that pupils are safe in and out of school. They understand the additional vulnerabilities of pupils with very complex needs. Staff's training is up to date. Record-keeping is detailed. Designated safeguarding leads are diligent in their work. They communicate with outside agencies appropriately when required. New systems to ensure that those in positions of governance have a clear oversight of safeguarding have been introduced recently. Leaders are monitoring and refining these to ensure that the proprietor continues to have clear oversight of all aspects of the school's work to keep pupils safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the proprietor)

- The school's wider curriculum has adequate breadth but could be wider ranging. This is especially the case for the most-able pupils. Although leaders constantly assess and refine the curriculum offer in light of changing cohorts of pupils, a more strategic review is now needed, especially in light of an increasing number of pupils joining the school in key stages 1 and 2. This will ensure that leaders are fully confident that all pupils are accessing a rich and engaging curriculum and achieving their full potential.
- Work to promote pupils' love of reading is underdeveloped. Although the school's programme to teach pupils to read is strong, more needs to be done to promote reading for pleasure and enjoyment. This will also help pupils in accessing the wider curriculum and further develop their understanding of the world around them.
- Careers education and the school's work to provide pupils with work experience need to be planned in a more consistent way. Pupils do access aspects of careers education, but this is not as well coordinated as leaders want. Work has already started in this area. More needs to be done to ensure that pupils can access high-quality careers information and guidance alongside meaningful work experience to prepare them better in their next steps after leaving school.

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	131531
DfE registration number	850/6085
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	10214652
Type of school	Other Independent Special School
School category	Independent School
Age range of pupils	4 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	55
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	11
Number of part-time pupils	None
Proprietor	Aspris Children's Services Limited
Chair	Trevor Torrington
Headteacher	Lesley Walkden
Annual fees (day pupils)	£81,601 to £108,107
Telephone number	01189 817 720
Website	www.aspriscs.co.uk/find-a-location/tadley-court-school-hampshire/
Email address	Tadleyschool@aspriscs.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	14 to 16 November 2017

Information about this school

- Tadley Court is an independent special school for pupils with autism spectrum conditions. Many have associated speech, language and communication difficulties. Almost all pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- Governance of the school is provided by officers employed by the proprietor who report to the board of directors.
- The school's last standard inspection took place in November 2017 when its overall effectiveness was judged to be good.
- At the time of this inspection, there were no children in the early years foundation stage.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

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's education provision received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors held a wide range of meetings with the headteacher, members of the senior management team, curriculum leaders, and teaching and support staff.
- The lead inspector met the proprietor's chief operations officer and the director of operations, who also acts as the chair of governors.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics and PSHE. Deep dives included visiting lessons, looking at pupils' work, hearing pupils read, 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, 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.

- The lead inspector talked formally to two different groups of pupils to gain their views on the school. Inspectors talked informally to pupils in all phases of the school throughout the inspection.
- The lead inspector considered the views of parents submitted through the Ofsted Parent View survey. Ofsted's surveys for pupils and staff were also taken into account.

Inspection team

Clive Close, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Sue Bzikot

Ofsted Inspector

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