

Inspection of an outstanding school: Addington School

Woodlands Avenue, Woodley, Reading, Berkshire RG5 3EU

Inspection dates:

28 and 29 March 2023

Outcome

Addington School continues to be an outstanding school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Addington School is life-changing. Pupils who attend the school face significant challenges with learning. They receive an outstanding quality of education. Staff have high ambitions for pupils. Importantly, all pupils have a voice. Staff help pupils to communicate using various communication devices. Consequently, pupils communicate their wishes, likes and dislikes. This helps them to get on well with each other and to learn effectively in class.

Relationships between staff and pupils are very strong. This helps staff get to know pupils quickly. Staff understand what will and will not work for each pupil. Pupils achieve highly because of the personalised support they receive. This includes a well-thought-out package of educational, sensory and therapeutic support. As a result, pupils behave well and become independent, confident learners who enjoy school.

Pupils benefit from a wide range of opportunities. School clubs help to develop pupils' talents and interests. For example, many enjoy the choir, nail art, dance and computing clubs. A group of pupils who spoke to the lead inspector excitedly told him about their recent residential trip to Wales. They reflected on how the trip helped them, for example with social skills.

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

Strong leadership is woven into the fabric of this school. The headteacher's relentless vision to ensure pupils achieve highly is infectious. She has developed a highly successful team of staff that is focused on meeting the specific needs of every pupil. Governors, leaders and staff have clear roles and responsibilities. This helps the school to run very smoothly.

Over the last few years, leaders have focused sharply on strengthening the curriculum. They have developed an ambitious curriculum that incorporates an adapted version of the early years foundation stage and national curriculum. Importantly, pupils follow a curriculum that is highly personalised. Education, health and care (EHC) plans set out

specific outcomes for each pupil. These outcomes are used to put in place personalised learning plans that break down what pupils need to learn and when. These include the specific strategies staff need to use. Leaders ensure that pupils' individual needs are integrated into the curriculum. Speech and language therapy and occupational therapy support pupils' learning. For some pupils who have significant barriers, they follow a highly bespoke curriculum that focuses firmly on supporting their sensory impairments, communication and profound learning difficulties.

Pupils enjoy learning a range of subjects, including reading, literacy and communication. Staff are trained well in the teaching of phonics. This helps to ensure a consistent approach across the school. A well-established phonics programme ensures that pupils learn the different sounds that letters make in the right order and at the right time. This is particularly important given the difficulties many pupils face with reading. Pupils read books that are carefully matched to the sounds they have learned. This gives them a sense of success as they begin to read with more confidence. The library has a range of interesting books that pupils can choose from. Pupils learn mathematics; personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education and relationships and sex education; science; music; art; drama; and physical education. There are opportunities for pupils to study horticulture, hospitality and bicycle maintenance in key stages 4 and 5. Some pupils gain qualifications and accreditations in different subjects.

Right from the early years through to the sixth form, pupils thrive. The environment supports pupils' learning very well. Staff are highly trained, and they use their training to ensure that every pupil learns as effectively as possible. Staff explain new learning clearly. They ask helpful questions, show pupils useful examples and check pupils' small steps in learning systematically. There are opportunities for regular repetition, which helps pupils remember what they have learned.

Developing life skills is an important part of the Addington experience. The curriculum equips pupils with the important knowledge and skills that they will need as they move through school and beyond. Staff make the most of every opportunity to teach pupils the skills that they will need later in life. For example, pupils benefit from learning how to cook, how to follow food hygiene practices and how to use a washing machine to wash and dry clothes. They learn how to read clothing labels and understand them. Pupils also learn about sensitive topics. Pupils eloquently explained concepts such as equalities, consent and online safety to inspectors. A well-thought-out approach to careers education provides pupils with the opportunity to explore the different options available to them when they leave school. Many pupils also experience the world of work by engaging with local employers.

Staff feel proud to be part of the 'Addington family'. Those who completed the online staff survey were very positive about the support that they receive from leaders. Leaders take the workload and well-being of staff seriously. This is something staff value highly. As a result, they are happy working at the school and feel that they make a positive difference to the lives of the pupils in their care.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Addington pupils are particularly vulnerable. Careful checks are carried out on staff who work at the school to ensure that they are suitable. Staff are highly trained and aware of the different risks pupils face. Leaders have established effective systems and processes that are used well by staff. This helps safeguarding leaders identify actions that they need to take. These leaders work closely with other professionals, such as social workers. The curriculum has a very positive impact on pupils' understanding of risk. Consequently, they are very knowledgeable about how to stay safe.

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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be outstanding in July 2013.

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	110187
Local authority	Wokingham
Inspection number	10256558
Type of school	All-through
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	3 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	271
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	40
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Mark Trepte
Headteacher	Sara Attra
Website	www.addington.wokingham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	17 October 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The number of pupils on roll has increased significantly since the last inspection.
- All pupils have EHC plans. These are for severe learning difficulties, moderate learning difficulties or profound and multiple learning difficulties. Over half also have autism spectrum disorder.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 to 13 with information and engagement 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 leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading and communication, mathematics, music and PSHE education. 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 well the curriculum is implemented.
- Inspectors met with senior leaders, staff, pupils and those with responsibility for governance, including the chair of governors and three other governors.
- The lead inspector spoke to the local authority school improvement officer and the school's own external school improvement partner.
- Inspectors met with a group of staff to explore staff's 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

Nina Marabese

His Majesty's Inspector

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