

Saffron Valley Collegiate

279 High Street, Croydon, Surrey CR0 1QH

Inspection dates

26–27 March 2019

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher has established a unity of purpose across a collegiate school which caters for a very wide range of pupils' needs.
- Pupils benefit from effective teaching which helps them begin to recover from significant setbacks in their education.
- Teachers typically provide effective support to enable pupils to sustain progress in a range of subjects. However, there is some variability in the effectiveness of the teaching of English, especially for the most able.
- Leaders set appropriate priorities for improvement and evaluate the school's effectiveness accurately. The skills of some leaders newer to their roles are still developing.
- Leaders' influence extends beyond the school, where they use their knowledge of pupils and predominant local risks to contribute to efforts to safeguard young people.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is effective. Leaders are determined to make sure that pupils have memorable experiences despite the challenges these may present.
- Teachers understand what the curriculum sets out for pupils' learning. Opportunities for pupils to learn how to try and stay safe and develop social skills are embedded throughout the programmes of study.
- Many pupils are admitted to the school because they have not been able to behave well enough in mainstream education. These pupils typically make progress in learning to manage their behaviour.
- Many pupils improve their attendance when they come to this school. However, leaders recognise that weaknesses in attendance must remain a priority for improvement.
- Governors use the wide range of information available to them to challenge and support leaders effectively.
- Safeguarding arrangements are effective. There is a strong, shared understanding of the risks likely to face many pupils at the school.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further develop the leadership of English so that the quality of teaching of reading and writing, particularly for the most able pupils, becomes more consistently effective.
- Improve the attendance of pupils who continue to have a very poor record of coming to school.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Since her appointment in September 2018, the headteacher has strengthened the cohesion between the diverse provision spread across the four sites in the collegiate. This is ensuring that good practice is being more effectively shared and used. Heads of each provision are held closely to account for implementing agreed policies.
- Leaders newer to their role are developing their skills well and making more significant contributions to school improvement. Senior leaders recognise the need to ensure that subject leaders that are more established in their roles continue to support and help develop those who have more recently taken on responsibilities.
- Leaders understand the complex and varied range of needs of the pupils attending the school, including those who attend alternative provision. They use this to make effective decisions about how best to challenge pupils to make good progress. Their plans for improvement include clear measures of success and challenging but realistic timescales. Leaders evaluate the quality of the provision accurately.
- Staff appreciate leaders' efforts to promote their well-being. For example, some staff responding to the inspection survey report a positive impact of the introduction of staff 'BeSafe' working groups.
- The curriculum ensures that pupils have a broad choice of learning. Teachers understand what pupils are intended to learn in the programmes of study on offer. There is an emphasis on preparing pupils who have often previously missed large amounts of education for obtaining qualifications and post-16 placements. However, leaders also promote pupils' ambition by, for example, encouraging older pupils to try for a GCSE in art or English literature.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is good. Leaders are determined to make sure that pupils experience the theatre, go to the countryside and participate in social activities such as eating a meal together at a restaurant, however complex their needs may be.
- Leaders ensure that additional funding for disadvantaged pupils and for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is appropriately used and well accounted for. For example, pupils who have education, health and care plans (EHC plans) typically benefit from consistently helpful learning objectives aimed at preparing them for adulthood. This is because leaders make sure that professionals work together to review and assess pupils' progress skilfully.

Governance of the school

- Governors organise their work sensibly to ensure that sufficient time and expertise are available to gain a rounded view of this complex school. They share leaders' drive and commitment to giving vulnerable pupils a chance of making a success of their education. They are also well informed about the predominant risks facing children and young people who attend this school.
- Written records of governors' work show that they keep up with information about

current standards and ask challenging questions of leaders.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Staff have a secure understanding of statutory guidance and understand the predominant risks facing the school's pupils.
- There is a sharp focus on ensuring that staff are adequately trained in responding to safeguarding issues related to pupils' mental health. For example, qualified mental health first aiders are located on all school sites.
- Leaders drive and maintain effective communications with other professionals to ensure that pupils have the right support from specialist services. For example, leaders have developed agreements with the youth offending scheme and the gangs team. This ensures that everyone is alerted promptly when a pupil known to these services is enrolled at the school.
- Leaders make checks on safeguarding arrangements at the range of alternative providers used. This gives them and governors confidence in the consistency of provision for those pupils who spend a lot of time away from the school premises.
- Pupils and staff typically express confidence in safeguarding arrangements. Pupils benefit from a wide range of activities aimed at learning to identify and respond to known risks, such as misuse of drugs and gang affiliation. Leaders take the initiative in contributing to the work of the wider community in helping pupils to stay safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers and other staff know pupils well and develop strong relationships which contribute positively to encouraging pupils to commit to learning. They are faced with a complex and changing profile of pupils, who often arrive with little readiness to learn. As a result of these positive relationships, pupils make good progress in committing to the day-to-day routines of school life.
- Teachers are aspirational for pupils' achievement and use assessment well to decide how to teach the agreed curriculum. Across a range of subjects, including English and mathematics, teaching typically allows pupils to deepen knowledge and develop skills, particularly those they need to function confidently in their future lives.
- Teachers are confident about adapting the curriculum to meet the needs and interests of pupils. For example, in mathematics, teachers use data and scenarios likely to be relevant to pupils' experiences, which helps them enjoy lessons and see how learning can be of use to them.
- Teachers receive training to respond to needs and go further to develop pupils' skills. This includes helping pupils in some settings in the collegiate who have difficulty managing their own behaviour.
- Teachers contribute well to helping pupils in key stage 3 acquire the necessary skills and attitudes to attempt re-integration into mainstream education.
- Pupils are typically positive about how teachers explain new learning and point out how pupils can improve their work.
- In English, teaching helps pupils to learn how to apply reading and writing skills to life

situations. Teachers use assessment well and guidance from specialists such as speech and language therapists to decide the order in which to introduce skills and knowledge. However, pupils' work shows that there is some variability in how effectively teachers challenge and develop the most able pupils' ability to deepen their understanding. There are good examples of teachers promoting reading for pleasure, but this is variable across all settings.

- Most of the time, teachers identify gaps in pupils' learning skilfully and help pupils to improve their accuracy and confidence. This is particularly consistent in the teaching of mathematics and science.
- Leaders' checks on the impact of tutors working with pupils off-site as part of the 'Springboard' programme have improved the consistency and effectiveness of teaching for pupils who are unable to attend school.
- Teachers often provide helpful information to keep parents and carers informed about their children's progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils typically make strong progress in their personal development across the very diverse range of provision in the school. Leaders and teachers ensure that pupils build confidence whatever their needs and benefit from suitable support from staff.
- Pupils contribute to the wider community positively, despite their significant needs and challenges. For example, pupils in key stage 4 have built strong relations as a rugby team and successfully participate in a local competitive tournament. Other pupils work with the local police to help them to understand the current views of young people in the community. A few pupils have been able to go into local primary schools to talk to younger children about the risks involved in gang affiliation.
- Leaders keep a close eye on pupils' ambitions and wishes for future careers and training. They use this information to decide on the range of careers advice on offer. For example, pupils have recently benefited from a wider range of information about careers in construction and the caring professions.
- There are effective arrangements to help pupils learn how to stay safe online. Teachers also check which risks pupils are likely to face during longer school holidays and arrange workshops to help pupils become more resilient to these.
- Leaders check to make sure that the personal development and welfare of pupils attending alternative provision are suitable.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Many find it very difficult to manage their own behaviour, which is why they are attending the school. Some have been in serious trouble because of their behaviour. The collegiate is typically effective in helping pupils to improve their behaviour over time.
- Most pupils told inspectors that they feel that behaviour is well managed in school and

that teachers are typically effective in reducing the impact of poor behaviour on learning. Pupils understand the system of rewards and sanctions intended to help them reflect on poor behaviour and make amends. As one pupil put it, 'The school helps me understand myself more.'

- Pupils typically do not see bullying as a problem at the school. However, they are aware of how to identify discriminatory behaviour and what to do if they consider themselves to be a victim.
- The school usually manages to improve the attendance of pupils. However, leaders understand the risks associated with pupils missing school and its negative impact on their learning. They are determined to continue to work to engage the hard-to-reach pupils and parents when attendance remains low.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils arrive at the school with a very wide range of starting points, which are influenced by their prior experiences of school, their situation and needs. There is no typicality about these. Pupils benefit from effective efforts to help them re-engage with education and make good progress across a range of subjects.
- The school admits a high proportion of pupils mid-year and some at a very late stage of their education in key stage 4. Discussions with some of these pupils and work seen demonstrate that they typically make strong progress despite often very challenging circumstances.
- The school is successful in ensuring that a large proportion of pupils attending key stage 3 sustain strong progress in learning and personal development so they can attempt a move back into a mainstream school.
- The vast majority of pupils attain a recognised qualification in English and mathematics by the end of key stage 4. Current pupils in Year 11 are making sustained progress typically, including disadvantaged pupils entitled to additional funding. However, in English, the most able and those ready to apply their writing and reading skills to enrich their learning do not make such effective progress. Poor attendance also gets in the way of progress for some.
- From often very vulnerable starting points, pupils make strong progress in understanding how they can contribute to their own and the wider community and apply their skills.
- In 2018, over three quarters of pupils went on to participate in employment, education or training. Leaders and governors have been determined to improve this, and their effective action, for example by providing a wider range of work experiences, means that a larger proportion of current Year 11 pupils are on track to secure placements when they leave.
- Disadvantaged pupils usually make similarly good progress to others in the school. Leaders are ensuring that any differences between the achievement of pupils who are making weaker progress and that of their peers are diminishing.

School details

Unique reference number	101706
Local authority	Croydon
Inspection number	10058821

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Pupil referral unit
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	234
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Johnston
Headteacher	Jennifer Adamson
Telephone number	020 8680 0949
Website	www.saffronvalleycollegiate.co.uk
Email address	asearle6.306@lgflmail.org
Date of previous inspection	22 January 2014

Information about this school

- Saffron Valley Collegiate consists of five specialist units located on four different sites spread throughout the London Borough of Croydon. The Springboard setting is located in the south of the borough. It provides short-term education for pupils with medical needs and also admits a small number of primary-aged pupils. It shares the premises with the Cotelands provision, which admits emotionally based school refusers (EBSR) in Years 9–11 and key stages 3 and 4 teenage parents. The key stage 4 provision is set on two separate sites, one in central Croydon and one in the north of the borough. These admit pupils who have been excluded or are at risk of exclusion from mainstream schools as a result of their behaviour. One of the sites also includes a short-term support and assessment respite provision. Finally, the key stage 3 site, also in central Croydon, is a short walk from one of the key stage 4 settings and admits key stage 3 pupils who have been, or are at risk of being, excluded from mainstream schools. Each setting is led by a head of provision and the whole collegiate is led by the headteacher. The collegiate is currently in the process of applying to convert to academy status.

- The school uses seven alternative providers in the local area to give pupils experiences which are aimed to meet their needs.
- The proportion of pupils who are entitled to pupil premium funding is much higher than average.
- Nearly all pupils have SEND. A higher-than-average proportion have EHC plans.

Information about this inspection

- During the inspection the lead inspector visited all five settings which form the school. He spoke to pupils about their work and experiences, and held discussions with leaders.
- Inspectors carried out a wide range of observations in lessons and around each setting in the school, often jointly with leaders. They scrutinised pupils' work and looked at examples of how their progress is assessed.
- A meeting was held with representatives of the governing body. Inspectors also held telephone conversations with the school improvement partner and an officer of the local authority. A call was made to a leader of one of the alternative provisions used by the school.
- Inspectors also looked at a range of documents related to safeguarding, school improvement and assessment.
- Fourteen responses to the pupil survey were considered, along with 55 staff questionnaires and five free-text responses from parents. There were too few responses to the online Parent View survey to enable these to be taken into account.

Inspection team

Andrew Wright, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Francis Gonzalez	Ofsted Inspector
Charlotte Millward	Ofsted Inspector

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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. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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