

# Inspection of Medway Green School

School Lane, Wouldham, Rochester, Kent ME1 3TS

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Inspection dates: 7 to 9 December 2021

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Outstanding**

Leadership and management **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Not previously inspected

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

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils talk very positively about their experiences at school. This is heartening because many have struggled in previous settings, or simply not attended previous schools for a range of reasons. Pupils said that they feel that staff and their peers are more understanding and have patience when patience is needed. They told the lead inspector that 'We get the help we need,' and that 'There are more kids here who have had the same experience and understand what it's like to be bullied, so we don't...'

Behaviour is good here, because staff have high expectations and pupils are encouraged to understand the impact of their actions and make the right choices when their emotions get the better of them. Pupils particularly enjoy their forest school experiences. A relatively new addition to their curriculum, they enjoy learning in a different environment and particularly relish using a range of tools, although expressed disappointment at some restrictions imposed to maintain health and safety.

Pupils talk positively about the help they get from staff. A clear message from the vast majority of parents and carers who replied to the parent survey is that they too appreciate the nurture, care and support their children receive here.

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

This is a good and improving school. A lot of progress has been made since the school opened with just six pupils two years ago. This is even more impressive when the impact of COVID-19 is taken into account. Leaders lead by example at Medway Green. Their aspirations are high. They know the school and pupils well and expect staff to have the same understanding and dedication to meeting pupils' needs as they have. Consequently, staff have confidence in leaders, are proud to work at the school, and talk positively about their workload. This includes those staff who are new to teaching and those who aspire to become qualified teachers.

The curriculum is fit for purpose and tailored well for the school's present cohort of pupils. As a small school that provides exclusively for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), leaders have designed a curriculum that has appropriate breadth, while catering as much as practicable for pupils' own strengths and interests.

Many pupils who attend have had poor or negative experiences in previous schools. Some have not had a stable education for extended periods of time prior to joining Medway Green. Despite this, staff are adept at motivating pupils to re-engage with learning and providing positive experiences in classrooms to boost pupils' confidence and levels of self-esteem. This is especially the case for pupils who have settled and attended the school for longer periods of time. The impact of this is that these pupils are now moving forward at a quicker pace than has been the case in the recent past.

Staff have a wide range of specialisms and the subject knowledge needed to teach mathematics, English and the school's wider curriculum. This includes support staff who contribute well to the quality of education the school provides. Leaders are developing closer links with other schools to develop some aspects of the curriculum further, including for science and design technology.

Reading and the love of books are promoted well in the school. Younger pupils benefit from a phonics programme which is delivered confidently by staff. Additional support is available for pupils who need it. This includes in mathematics, which is also a favourite subject among many pupils. Because pupils are taught in very small groups, staff are able to tailor their input to meet the needs of most pupils well. However, on occasion, not all work is pitched at the right level.

The school promotes the pastoral development of pupils extremely well. Much of this is achieved through the school's personal, social and health education (PSHE) scheme of work. The wider curriculum is also enriched by relationship, sex and citizenship education, as well as weekly sessions promoting skills for life and pupils' social, emotional and mental health. Much of this work is aimed at building pupils' confidence and preparing them for their next steps in education. It also helps pupils gain an increasing awareness of the wider world around them, as well as developing their understanding of values and what it means to live in modern Britain.

Leaders' work to ensure that the independent school standards are met consistently is closely monitored by the proprietor. Directors understand the importance of making sure that the measured growth in pupil numbers year on year does not have a negative impact on pupils already on roll. This includes ensuring that the gradual evolution of the curriculum truly meets the needs of all pupils as the school expands. Aspects such as careers advice and guidance are already helping shape pupils' thoughts and options for education and training after they leave the school. Plans to further develop both academic and vocational strands of the school's curriculum offer are well advanced. Additionally, those in positions of governance know the school well and fully understand their duties to promote the welfare, health and safety of pupils, staff and visitors to the school.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All staff understand their responsibilities to protect the welfare, health and safety of pupils. Some of this is achieved through the school's curriculum offer, teaching pupils about the potential dangers they face when online, or about building respectful relationships, for instance.

Staff are knowledgeable about the additional challenges pupils with SEND face. Their training is up to date. They know what to do if they have a concern, no matter how small it is. Record-keeping is fit for purpose. The single central record of checks on adults is sound. The culture to safeguard pupils is strong.

## **What does the school need to do to improve? (Information for the school and proprietor)**

- Sometimes, expectations of what pupils can achieve are not high enough. This includes for older pupils in mathematics and for younger pupils who are now developing their phonics and early reading skills much more rapidly than in the past. This is partly because of the school's excellent work to build pupils' self-esteem and the impact this has on their motivation to learn. However, staff now need to ensure that they plan learning that challenges all pupils at the right level, especially the most able. This will better support all pupils to make the progress they are capable of as they move through the curriculum year on year.

## **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.

If you are the provider and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	147207
<b>DfE registration number</b>	886/6157
<b>Local authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	10202282
<b>Type of school</b>	Other independent special school
<b>School category</b>	Independent special school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5 to 14
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	34
<b>Number of part-time pupils</b>	None
<b>Proprietor</b>	Acorn Care and Education Limited
<b>Chair</b>	Richard Power
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ben Price
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£44,680 to £78,370
<b>Telephone number</b>	01634 968 420
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.medwaygreenschool.co.uk">www.medwaygreenschool.co.uk</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:mgs-office@medwaygreenschool.co.uk">mgs-office@medwaygreenschool.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- Medway Green School opened in October 2019. A material change inspection to consider the proprietor's request to increase the age range and number of pupils on roll took place in May 2021. This inspection was the school's first standard inspection.
- The school caters for pupils who have social, emotional and mental health needs and associated conditions. All pupils have education, health and care plans and are placed by their local authorities.
- 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 received since COVID-19 began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

- Inspectors held a wide range of meetings with the headteacher, other leaders and teaching and support staff in the school. The lead inspector met with the chair of the governing body. He also talked to the chair of proprietors on the telephone.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: Reading, mathematics, science and PSHE. Deep dives included visiting lessons, looking at pupils' work, 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.
- Pupils were talked to throughout the inspection to gain their views about the school. This included two different formal meetings with small groups of pupils. Parent, pupil and staff surveys were also taken into account.

## **Inspection team**

Clive Close, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Sue Bzikot

Ofsted Inspector

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