

Inspection of Goldwyn School

Godinton Lane, Great Chart, Ashford, Kent TN23 3BT

Inspection dates: 19 and 20 October 2022

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Sixth-form provision

Outstanding

Previous inspection grade

Outstanding

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Goldwyn School thrive. There is a strong culture of 'anything is possible', and pupils' personal development is at the heart of all that the school does. The Goldwyn's 'whole-child education' covers all aspects of pupils' lives. Consequently, over time, pupils develop their confidence, resilience and motivation to succeed. They learn to overcome successfully their personal barriers to learning and are exceptionally well prepared for their future lives. Pupils leave school with the determination, knowledge and academic qualifications needed to continue their successes. Pupils feel that their life chances are greatly improved as a result of their time at this school. As one parent told us, 'This school has changed my child's life.'

Pupils behave remarkably well. They are highly respectful, and the school is friendly, calm and studious. Highly skilled staff care deeply about pupils' well-being and have an in-depth understanding of how to help them achieve their full potential. Staff enable pupils to realise that success is available for everyone. These strong, trusting relationships cannot be underestimated. As a result of these, pupils feel safe and secure and are supported well to manage any difficult situations successfully.

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

Aspirational leaders strive to ensure that pupils are as fully prepared for their adult lives as possible. All staff hold the highest of ambitions for every pupil, and pupils rise to these high expectations. Prior to joining the school, many pupils have been unable to attend school regularly due to their special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Because of this, staff rightly prioritise building warm, trusting relationships quickly. They work with drive and determination to ensure that pupils are fully engaged in full-time, meaningful learning as soon as possible.

Leaders ensure that pupils' learning is meticulously well planned and organised. Pupils attend one of four school sites, depending on their individual needs. Each site has a carefully planned curriculum pathway, formed of academic and/or vocational studies. This forms the basis of a bespoke, tailored curriculum for each pupil, with their personal education, health and care (EHC) plan targets carefully woven throughout. Pupils benefit hugely from a broad range of useful interventions and personalised support, provided by staff with specific, relevant expertise.

Teachers are skilled in delivering their subjects and are experts in teaching pupils with social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs. Staff have high expectations of engagement and participation in learning from pupils. Teachers know how to 'hook' pupils into learning and make sure that they remain motivated. All staff are acutely aware of pupils' individual needs and monitor pupils' progress carefully, skilfully adapting teaching strategies as needed. Consequently, pupils achieve exceptionally well. Their qualifications are appropriate and meaningful and allow the vast majority of pupils to move on successfully to mainstream college. The comprehensive careers information, education, advice and guidance pupils receive

enable them to make sensible, informed choices about their future. Pupils are encouraged to be aspirational and are supported well to achieve their dreams.

If pupils join the school unable to read fluently, staff prioritise this. They quickly and accurately identify the specific additional support that pupils require. Skilled staff then use a range of highly effective strategies that allow pupils to gain the knowledge and skills they need to become confident, fluent readers. As a result, pupils make excellent progress with their reading in an age-appropriate, functional way.

The unwavering focus on promoting pupils' personal development results in young adults who know they can succeed in life. 'Goldwyn time' is time dedicated daily to pupils' personal and social development. Forming part of the curriculum designed specifically for Goldwyn pupils, this provision puts a strong focus on emotional self-regulation and how to make informed choices. As a result, pupils flourish, making excellent progress, particularly in terms of their social communication. Pupils are provided with a wealth of opportunities to develop their talents successfully, which they do. Leaders are committed to ensuring that these opportunities are extensive and bespoke.

Throughout their time at Goldwyn School, pupils learn how to become as independent as possible. Students who stay on in the sixth form benefit hugely from the extra time to develop personally before embarking on their next stage of education, employment or training. Alongside their academic studies, they learn useful life skills that help prepare them exceedingly well for adulthood.

Leaders have successfully created a culture where staff feel valued and know that their opinion really matters. Leaders ensure that all staff, including those who drive pupils to and from school, receive highly effective training. Staff appreciate the support that they get from leaders. They work collaboratively to share specialist knowledge and expertise across the school sites.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff know all pupils and their families particularly well. Staff training means that all staff are very knowledgeable about school systems and about the additional safeguarding vulnerabilities of pupils that are a result of their SEND. Any concerns are recorded and acted on quickly.

Leaders have developed extremely useful, strong working relationships with multi-agency professionals. Leaders are tenacious in securing any extra help for families when they need it.

Pupils are helped to understand, and taught to manage, risks effectively. When needed, staff thoughtfully adapt the personal and social development curriculum so that they can react to issues happening in the wider lives of pupils.

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	119042
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10240022
Type of school	Special
School category	Foundation special
Age range of pupils	10 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	191
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	26
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Kate Wilson
Principal	Kerry Greene
Website	www.goldwyn.kent.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	7 December 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Goldwyn School is a special school for pupils aged 10 to 18 years. All pupils at the school have an EHC plan. The vast majority of pupils have SEMH needs.
- The school has four sites. At each site, a different curriculum pathway is taught, and pupils attend the site that is best suited to their SEND. However, this is not restrictive, as pupils are able to move between sites as their needs change.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has more than doubled the number of pupils on roll and now has a sixth form. The sixth-form provision was previously an independent specialist college.
- The school currently uses no alternative provision.
- 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.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school had 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 met with the principal, senior leaders, subject leaders, teachers and teaching assistants. The lead inspector also met with members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspection team carried out deep dives in English, mathematics, vocational learning, and personal and social development. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons with leaders, spoke to teachers, talked to or observed pupils and looked at their work or evidence of their learning.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils on different school sites.
- Inspectors looked at curriculum information, work and evidence used to gain pupils' accreditations, and a range of documentation, including for individual pupils. This included EHC plans, behaviour plans and individual pupil targets.
- To look closely at safeguarding in the school, inspectors spoke to leaders, pupils, staff and governors. The lead inspector looked at a range of safeguarding documentation and systems, including the school's single central record, which contains details of recruitment checks.
- Inspectors considered 18 responses to the online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text comments. They also considered the views of 46 pupils and 65 staff who completed Ofsted surveys.

Inspection team

Maxine McDonald-Taylor, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Nina Marabese	His Majesty's Inspector
Sue Bzikot	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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