

Hawkswood (Therapeutic)

URN: 137677 | Inspected: 25 November 2025

Safeguarding

standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

Achievement

Strong standard

Through a well-designed and bespoke provision of therapeutic and academic support, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged make great strides in overcoming barriers to their learning. Pupils often join the school feeling anxious about education and lack self-confidence. Many have had long periods out of education. Leaders have clear processes in place to identify the gaps in pupils' learning and provide the support that each pupil needs to close these gaps quickly. As their motivation and self-esteem grow, pupils' attendance and attentiveness increase substantially, helping them to learn well and thrive. Pupils typically make rapid progress through the curriculum from their different starting points. Pupils develop knowledge and skills across a range of subjects and gain qualifications to enable them to progress successfully and sustain their next stage of education, training or employment.

Curriculum and teaching

Strong standard

Leaders have sustained and built on the strengths of the ambitious curriculum seen at the previous inspection. They astutely review and adjust each pupil's timetable, achieving a careful balance between therapeutic interventions, academic learning and personal and social development, tailored to individual pupil's needs. Staff make close and skilful reference to pupils' longer-term targets, for example those in a pupil's education, health and care plan. They ensure that pupils work towards and achieve the ambitious targets set for them at this school. Teachers' assessments identify gaps in pupils' learning precisely. Pupils who are disadvantaged and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities benefit from helpful individualised support so that they catch up and deepen their learning. Leaders prioritise securing pupils' essential knowledge. Pupils who are behind in reading receive intensive support from suitably experienced staff, using well-considered resources and routines, so that they catch up swiftly and keep up. Teachers use their subject specialisms to provide a well-thought-through and motivating curriculum, providing continuity with pupils' previous studies and supporting their

next steps

in education. Teachers give clear explanations to resolve any misconceptions. They support pupils with revision

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techniques and tips to help remember key facts and technical vocabulary and to retain and apply information to more complex ideas.

Inclusion

Strong standard

Being inclusive is woven through every aspect of life in this school. Leaders ensure that they, and all staff, know and understand the barriers to learning and engagement faced by all pupils. Vulnerable pupils, such as those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those from disadvantaged backgrounds, receive highly effective and carefully designed support to enable them to thrive here. Before pupils start at the school, leaders have clear strategies in place to meet pupils' needs and to enable them to benefit from the opportunities and experiences the school offers. Leaders work closely with pupils, their families and outside organisations to prioritise pupils' initial and ongoing targets. Leaders' high expectations and well-established routines ensure that there is regular and frequent communication across the school, including between therapeutic and academic teams. Staff rigorously review pupils' progress in meeting their targets to ensure that the right steps are taken to help pupils engage positively with life in school and to achieve well.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard

Leaders have sustained and extended the strengths of the school seen at the previous inspection. They are proactive in their ongoing review of policy and practice, responding productively to new and ongoing challenges. Leaders ensure that staff have enduring expertise in their inclusive practice in response to changing profiles of pupils attending the school. For example, leaders and staff receive useful training that helps them to meet the needs of pupils with autism and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. Leaders are also highly focused on maintaining and building capacity to ensure that there is a consistent level of strategic and operational oversight of all aspects of the school's work. Staff benefit from a comprehensive programme of training and development opportunities. Leaders recognise and use staff's aspirations and talents, identifying the opportunities and experiences their work can offer to enable them to be fulfilled. Staff value their professional learning facilitated by the school, including embarking on Master's programmes, apprenticeships and gaining mentoring opportunities. The board of governors, comprising the joint management committee, is knowledgeable about the work of the school and fully understands its strengths and priorities. Governors ensure that their training is up to date and that they are well placed to provide leaders with the optimal levels of challenge and support. Leaders are highly considerate of looking after staff wellbeing. They prioritise helping staff to stay well and providing a range of opportunities for staff to achieve a healthy work-life balance. Staff are especially appreciative of leaders' consideration of their workload when making policy changes and the time given for specific tasks.

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Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard

Leaders place the utmost priority on all pupils' personal development. Opportunities for pupils' personal development are woven carefully into all aspects of the curriculum and school life. Disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities benefit greatly from these enriching opportunities. Staff sensitively and skilfully remove any barriers to pupils accessing personal development. Pupils are equipped with the knowledge and personal skills they need to embark successfully on their chosen next stage of education, training or employment. The school provides a comprehensive and well-embedded careers programme. Leaders seize every opportunity to inspire and develop pupils' interests. Staff link an extensive range of enrichment activities to relevant career aspirations. Pupils benefit from a breadth of employment and training opportunities, including careers fairs and regular visits to and from a diverse range of employers and training providers. Leaders have a well-established and highly considered approach to providing pupils with work experience. Pupils gain valuable insight into the world of work through carefully chosen opportunities that develop their skills while meeting their social, emotional and mental health needs. Leaders are vigilant in their oversight of the personal development programme across the school to make sure that no pupil misses out. All pupils are taught key themes in personal, social and health education and relationships and sex education. Staff provide each pupil with information, guidance and support. This takes into account pupils' specific circumstances and challenges that are especially relevant to them. The school's emotional literacy programme guides pupils to develop the personal strategies they need to identify, articulate and manage their emotions. This helps them to recognise and overcome any challenges they face in day-to-day life, including in working environments and social settings.

What it's like to be a pupil at this school

When pupils arrive at school, they are welcomed with warm greetings and smiles. They settle in quickly, gaining a sense of belonging because of the positive relationships with staff and the friendships they make with each other. Leaders know each pupil very well and understand thoroughly the barriers to learning they face. Staff are quick to spot if any pupil is not quite themselves and act swiftly to provide the help needed to resolve any concerns. Serious behaviour incidents, such as bullying, are very rare. Pupils are kept safe and feel safe. If ever they feel worried, there is always an adult they can turn to for help. Pupils who are disadvantaged and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities benefit from individualised support. Many pupils have social, emotional and mental health needs. All pupils benefit from the calm and quiet environment in lessons and around the school. This helps them to start to enjoy learning and concentrate well on the tasks at hand. Staff skilfully identify gaps in pupils' learning and provide them with the individual support they need to catch up. Pupils typically attend well and make rapid progress from their different starting points, often after previously having long periods out of education. Staff provide pupils with high-quality careers information, advice and guidance. Pupils benefit from an extensive range of experiences and educational trips that inspire their interests and boost their career ambitions. They grow in confidence and self-esteem as they take on responsibilities through the school council and enterprise projects. They are delighted to help care for the school's therapy dog. Leaders enable pupils to recognise and understand the challenges they face in everyday life and equip them with the strategies they need to overcome them. The school's finely balanced combination of academic and

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therapeutic provision, with notably effective personal development, prepares pupils very well to take up and sustain their

next steps

in education, training or employment.

Next steps

- Leaders and those responsible for governance should sustain the effectiveness of their work in all areas. They should seek continued improvement, overcoming barriers and challenges, in order to drive a transformational impact for all pupils. This includes disadvantaged pupils, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, those who are known (or previously known) to children's social care and those who may face other barriers to their learning and/or wellbeing.

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard

Leaders maintain close oversight of pupils' attendance and take an individualised approach. They understand what works for each pupil and how to reduce the barriers to their attendance. Close communication between staff, families and pupils, coupled with staff's thorough understanding of each pupil's challenging circumstances, means that swift and effective steps are taken if there are any setbacks. Pupils' attendance improves substantially during their time here. Leaders have developed a school that presents a calm and caring environment that nurtures pupils' sense of belonging. Pupils want to attend. They value how the school teaches them to enjoy learning. Pupils are attentive and work purposefully in lessons. They are respectful and considerate towards each other and adults around the school. Pupils are reassured by and appreciate staff's high expectations for behaviour. Clear systems are in place to address any issues, although these are rarely needed. Staff know each pupil very well and are alert to changes in behaviour. They act quickly to resolve any concerns. They know, understand and take the right approaches to support individual pupils if they struggle to manage their behaviour.

For detailed performance data including disadvantage gap analysis, historical trends, and comparison tables, visit the school's profile on WhatSchool:

<https://whatschool.ai/en/school/hawkswood-therapeutic-chingford>