

Eagle House School

224 London Road, Mitcham, Surrey, CR4 3HD

Inspection dates 18–20 November 2014

Overall effectiveness	Good	2
Leadership and management	Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Achievement of pupils	Good	2
Early years provision	Good	2

Summary of key findings

This is a good school.

- Good teaching ensures that all pupils make consistently good progress according to their varying abilities.
- Teaching assistants make a good contribution to learning, both in lessons and when they work with individual pupils.
- Good teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage helps children settle quickly so that many make a good start in learning to communicate and in understanding what is expected of them.
- The safety of pupils is a priority in the school and staff are firmly committed to keeping pupils safe. Leaders and managers have established excellent policies and procedures that help ensure that pupils are always kept safe.
- Considering their difficulties, pupils' behaviour is outstanding in lessons and around school. Staff have created a calm environment that helps pupils focus and learn well.
- The school provides a good variety of activities which capture pupils' interest and enable pupils to focus on their learning. As a result, all pupils including those with severe autistic spectrum disorders achieve well.
- The proprietor consistently challenges senior leaders to improve all aspects of the school's provision. School leaders have secured sustained improvements since the consultant headteacher was appointed. Prior to this, most pupils made expected progress in their learning, now many are exceeding this outcome.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage do not make outstanding progress because the recording and checking system is not fully developed in order to ensure the acceleration of progress even further.
- A system for measuring and analysing the impact of therapy programmes is not yet fully embedded. As a result, the school cannot fully ensure that all students receive the therapeutic input that best suits them.
- The system for checking pupils' progress in subjects other than literacy and numeracy is not yet fully developed. As a result, senior managers do not have all the information they need to improve teaching in order to raise standards of achievement to outstanding.
- Opportunities for teachers to share outstanding practice are not fully developed.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets schedule 1 of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, as amended by the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out with one day's notice.
- The inspector observed 12 lessons taught by nine different teachers. He scrutinised pupils' work and held meetings with the headteacher, senior managers, therapists, school advisers, the proprietor and staff.
- The school's documentation was checked, including schemes of work, teachers' planning, assessment records and records pertaining to safeguarding, welfare, health and safety. The inspector checked the school's compliance with the regulations for independent schools.
- There were no responses to Parent View. The inspector took account of the views expressed in 37 questionnaires returned by staff and 25 responses to a questionnaire distributed by the school to parents in September 2014.

Inspection team

Chanan Tomlin, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Eagle House School is an independent special day school which was established in 2004 on its present site in the centre of Mitcham, Surrey. It is housed in a large, listed, early eighteenth century building, with additional accommodation constructed at a later date.
- The school provides education for pupils with autistic spectrum disorders and associated social and communication difficulties. There are currently 47 boys and girls on the school roll between the ages of four and 12 years.
- The school accepts children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, but no child receives government funding. There are currently four children in the Early Years Foundation Stage; one of these children is of compulsory school age. All except one attend full-time.
- All of the pupils have a statement of special educational needs which relates to autistic spectrum disorders. The school also admits pupils with additional complex emotional and educational needs associated with their autism. Pupils are placed at the school by a number of local authorities in London.
- The proprietor is the only governor of the school.
- A new consultant headteacher was appointed in March 2014.
- The school expresses the aim that 'all pupils will have a sense of achievement, raised self-esteem and will leave school with a positive attitude towards their life and learning'.
- The school uses no off-site provision.
- The school was last inspected in November 2011.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Embed the system for measuring and analysing the impact of therapy programmes in order to fully ensure that all students receive the therapeutic input that best suits them,
- Improve the quality of teaching to outstanding in order for pupils to make more rapid progress by:
 - embed the newly developed system for checking pupils' progress in all subjects across the whole school.
 - further develop opportunities for teachers to share outstanding practice.
- Improve levels of achievement in the Early Years Foundation Stage to outstanding by fully developing the system for recording and checking on the progress that children make over time.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- Outstanding leadership and management have ensured that levels of achievement have risen since the recent appointment of the new consultant headteacher. Middle leaders are becoming consistently more effective in their roles. The leadership team has succeeded in raising the levels of commitment of all staff. All are united in a drive to provide an excellent education for all pupils.
- The leadership team sets exacting goals, using teaching staff and the therapeutic team to help all pupils achieve well. Leaders have ensured that behaviour is outstanding.
- Leaders and managers know the school well and have a good understanding of its strengths, as well as areas that need to be developed.
- Leaders and managers have established excellent partnerships with external agencies to help pupils succeed in all aspects of their learning and development. They understand autism extremely well; they identify and implement effective systems that help pupils thrive.
- Leaders and managers support families extremely well. They give of their time to help parents understand and appreciate their children's needs and organise training and support groups for families. Regular contact between the school and parents helps pupils succeed in school because much of pupils' progress in school is reinforced at home on a consistent basis.
- The leadership of teaching is outstanding. Support for teachers and teaching assistants through frequent training is of a high standard. All teaching staff are developing high levels of expertise in teaching pupils with autistic spectrum disorders.
- The systems to check teachers' performance and effectiveness through regular lesson observations are used very well to ensure that all staff have relevant goals to raise standards of achievement even further.
- The establishment of a very effective curriculum access team made up of senior leaders and therapists meets regularly to assess pupils' needs and organise appropriate interventions. The team works well with teaching staff to provide high levels of support for all pupils.
- The school promotes the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils exceptionally well. Pupils learn about spirituality through art, music and ventures outdoors where they learn to appreciate the beauty of nature. They consistently learn about acceptable behaviour throughout each day. They learn about British culture, services and institutions through personal, social and health education, trips and visitors to the school and are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Safeguarding procedures fully meets statutory requirements.
- The school offers an excellent range of subjects that capture pupils' interest and help them focus and engage. Pupils take part in regular trips out of school that help pupils learn about the world around them and how to interact with others.
- The premises and accommodation are well-suited to support the subjects taught; all areas of the school are well maintained and decorated.
- The school meets the requirements related to the provision of information for parents and carers and the complaints procedure includes all of the required details.

- **The governance of the school:**

Leaders and managers are strongly held to account for every aspect of their work by the proprietor and chief executive officer. As a result, a drive for excellence permeates all sections of the school's leadership.

At present, the proprietor is the only governor of the school. He carries out his responsibilities with a firm sense of commitment, challenges senior leaders to improve all aspects of the school and provides them with high levels of support.

The proprietor and chief executive officer ask senior leaders penetrating questions about barriers to learning and check that everything is being done to overcome them. They are extremely well informed because they are often in school and meet regularly with staff and parents.

The proprietor and chief executive officer are the driving forces behind good teaching; this ensures that pupils consistently achieve well and make good progress. They support senior leaders in a consistent drive for improvement through effectively managing the performance of teachers and by providing regular, well-considered training for teaching staff.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. This is a considerable achievement given the different behaviours that pupils with autism present. Staff have succeeded in creating a calm, purposeful environment where pupils are very keen to learn new things. This is a major contributing factor to levels of achievement that have been consistently improving.
- The school provides a wide range of therapies to help pupils develop their global skills and to better access the subjects taught. These include occupational, speech and language, music and yoga therapies. Although these interventions help all pupils, a system for measuring and analysing the impact of therapy programmes is not yet fully embedded. As a result, the school cannot fully ensure that all students receive the therapeutic input that best suits them.
- Pupils cooperate with teachers and try hard to do what is asked of them. The more able are inquisitive and try to work things out for themselves. For example, during a Years 3 to 6 science lesson on switches, one pupil found and turned on the switch of a sound recorder on his own.
- Pupils of all ages, both boys and girls, play very well together during breaks. They have a say in what goes on in school and the pupils' council makes sure that their views are taken into account, for instance in initiating improvements to the playgrounds.
- Pupils help the wider community through raising funds for charity. For example, after one class baked cupcakes, they decided on their own to sell them and contribute the proceeds to charity.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils are made fully aware of the different forms of bullying, including cyber-bullying. They are also taught about the different ways that they might be mistreated by adults. Parents feel that the school is a very safe environment for their children; pupils know how to keep themselves safe and know where to turn if they have any problems.
- Overall, attendance is slightly below average because some pupils do not always attend for full days for carefully considered reasons related to their circumstances and needs. Over the last few months, attendance has been steadily improving.
- Pupils learn about respecting all people regardless of their race, ethnicity or background in a wide range of ways. The impact of this is that they are friendly and interested to know about people that are different from them.

The quality of teaching is good

- Good teaching ensures that all pupils with varying difficulties related to their autism make good progress in communicating, speaking, reading, writing and mathematics, according to their abilities.
- Classes are arranged according to ability, usually in key stages. Most work enables pupils of all ages and abilities to make good progress from their low starting points.
- Teachers and therapists always adjust work well according to how well pupils are doing. For example, during a Year 4 to 7 lesson where pupils were working on developing their independent skills, one pupil was asked to put on a shirt and button it up. When he was unwilling to put on the shirt himself, he was dressed by the occupational therapist. He did, however, succeed in buttoning it up and was heartily congratulated by his teachers.
- Pupils are always encouraged well, for example, to work on their own as much as they can. For example, during a Year 6 information and communication technology (ICT) lesson, pupils did literacy work on their own computers at their own pace. During this lesson, all pupils made good progress.
- Teaching assistants are very effective at providing extra help and most are usually fully involved in teaching and learning. Staff know pupils very well; they give them work that helps them make good progress in all areas of their learning.
- The most-able pupils are taught well throughout the school and make good progress.
- Pupils' work is marked regularly and accurately and this helps pupils understand what they have done well and how they can improve. Progress in literacy and numeracy is checked well across the whole school. This helps teachers and school leaders identify ways that they can improve teaching and learning in these subjects. However, the school has not yet fully embedded a system that effectively tracks progress for other subjects. As a result, leaders and teachers do not have all of the information that they need to accelerate progress in other subjects such as science and ICT.
- During this inspection, some examples of outstanding teaching were observed. Opportunities for teachers to share outstanding practice are not yet fully developed. A result of this is that teaching overall is good,

but not outstanding, and pupils are not enabled to make more rapid progress in their learning.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- All pupils join the school with very low starting points. Most pupils make at least expected progress in all areas of their learning, especially in their communication skills, and some exceed this. As a result, of the good progress that they make, pupils are well equipped to succeed in special secondary schools.
- Although pupils make good progress in numeracy, they make more sustained progress in literacy. The school acknowledges this and has well-developed plans to accelerate progress in numeracy.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage learn quickly about what is expected of them and how to act in a classroom setting. Considering the obstacles that they face, they make good progress in all of the areas of learning and development, especially in their communication and language development, and are well prepared to join the primary department.
- Pupils in all year groups in the primary department have skills that are well below those typical for their age because of their specific and often severe special educational needs. However, over time, they achieve well and make good progress in all of the areas of learning compared to pupils in similar schools. This is evident in the records and checks made on the progress that they make, especially in literacy and numeracy, throughout their time at school.
- More-able pupils are challenged according to their abilities and less-able pupils receive suitable work that helps each one work effectively. For example, during a Years 3 and 4 literacy lesson, some pupils worked through a story with the teacher using signing and visual support whilst another worked on his own worksheet about the same story. As a result of carefully planned work, pupils of all abilities achieve well and make good progress.

The early years provision

is good

- When children join the Early Years Foundation Stage all have skills that are well below those typical for their age. All have significant difficulties communicating and understanding what is expected of them. During the time that they spend in the setting, they make a good start at communicating, either through speech or signing and visual support, in interacting with each other and in understanding instructions.
- Throughout their time in the setting, children make consistent progress towards achieving the early learning goals.
- Good teaching and therapeutic interventions help children settle quickly and improve their listening skills. Carefully planned activities help them recognise words and objects. For example, children learned about forces by putting shapes into tubes and observing what happened when the tubes were picked up.
- Teachers record the progress that children make. However, the system for checking progress consistently well over time is not yet fully developed. As a result, teachers do not have all of the information that they need ensure that children make outstanding progress throughout their time at the setting.

What inspection judgements mean

School	
Grade	Judgement
Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

Detailed grade characteristics can be viewed in the *Non-association independent school inspection handbook* which is published on the Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/140053.

School details

Unique reference number	134594
Inspection number	451960
DfE registration number	315/6081

This inspection was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as inserted by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Special day school
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	4–12 years
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	47
Number of part time pupils	5
Proprietor	Mr Paul Conrathe
Chair	Mr Paul Conrathe
Headteacher	Mrs Janis Rogers
Date of previous school inspection	4–5 November 2011
Annual fees (day pupils)	£47,602
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