

Eagle House School

224 London Road, Mitcham Surrey CR4 3HD

Inspection dates

14–16 November 2017

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
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The proprietor and senior leaders have maintained the good standard of education at the school. They have ensured that all the independent school standards are met.
- Safeguarding is effective and takes appropriate account of pupils' complex needs.
- Pupils make good progress in English and mathematics from widely varying starting points. However, their progress across the other subjects is more variable.
- Teaching is good. Teaching staff are skilled at helping pupils, who all have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, overcome barriers to learning. They make lessons interesting and accessible.
- The school makes strong provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils make rapid progress in their personal development. Most who arrive having had difficulty managing their behaviour are supported well to improve. As a result, pupils feel safe and are able to make valued contributions to the school community.
- Senior leaders have made effective recent improvements to the curriculum. However, they recognise that middle leaders need to develop their leadership skills further so they can contribute more fully to leading improvement in their subject areas.
- The proprietor and governing board know the school well and offer effective far-sighted challenge to leaders as they drive further improvements.
- The early years is well led. As a result, children with complex needs whose development is well below that typical for their age get off to a good start.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to develop the skills of middle leaders so that they have a greater impact on driving further improvements to the curriculum and the quality of teaching.
- Further improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that teachers implement the new curriculum effectively across the whole range of subjects taught.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher, executive headteacher and chief executive officer work as a cohesive, effective team. They have identified and tackled priorities for improvement skilfully. As a result they have maintained the good standard of education at the school and ensured that all of the independent school standards are met.
- Senior leaders are rigorous in checking that the quality of teaching is consistently good. They are achieving their stated aim of ensuring that teachers offer an 'irresistible invitation to learning' for pupils.
- New staff undergo a thorough induction process which enables leaders to provide the necessary training and checks that teaching staff are capable of meeting pupils' complex needs. Leaders are all thorough in the way that they manage teachers' performance. Teachers are held to account for their work to improve outcomes and access to the curriculum for pupils.
- The current senior leadership team has recognised the need to rapidly develop the role of middle leaders in driving school improvement and monitoring the quality of teaching. Middle leaders now play a more direct role in raising achievement in different subjects. However, their plans for improvement are not always as sharply focused on outcomes as those of senior staff.
- Leaders analyse and account for the additional funding to which all pupils are entitled because they have an education, health and care plan. This funding is used effectively to diminish barriers to learning posed by pupils' SEN and/or disabilities. Pupils and parents are typically very positive about leaders' work to provide an inclusive and effective education for all.
- Senior leaders have focused sharply on further improving the curriculum in recent months. There are now three distinct pathways for pupils to follow, depending on the extent and characteristics of their needs. Leaders are also improving the depth and range of information they use to assess pupils' progress in subjects and in their personal development. As a result, the curriculum offered is well matched to the needs of pupils and offers effective opportunities for pupils to make good progress.
- The school offers strong provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. Pupils who spoke to inspectors spoke passionately about memorable learning experiences and the support that they have received in discovering their abilities. Leaders ensure that a wide range of activities are offered both in and outside school to broaden pupils' cultural horizons. All pupils benefit from these, no matter how profound or complex their needs are. As a result, leaders are doing an exceptional job of teaching pupils to understand British values and preparing them for their futures.
- Leaders ensure that parents receive the required information about the school and pupils' progress. A copy of the school's safeguarding policy is available on the school's website.

Governance

- The proprietor and board of directors use their extensive knowledge of the school to hold leaders closely to account for their actions. They have been particularly effective in

ensuring that they gain information from external partners such as an educational consultant to check on the accuracy of their evaluations.

- Governors have the skills necessary to use and interpret a wide range of information so they can ask challenging questions of leaders. They have well-considered plans for further developments of the premises and links with other similar providers.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Pupils, parents and staff all typically agree that arrangements to promote the welfare of pupils are effective. Leaders are particularly alert to the additional challenges of ensuring that pupils who have very limited means of communication can express any concerns they may have.
- Checks on the suitability of staff are robust and well recorded by knowledgeable staff. Staff who spoke to the inspector demonstrated a good understanding of particular risks and how to look for signs of abuse.
- Leaders do a good job of maintaining strong communication with parents, despite their geographical remoteness from the school. They also act tenaciously to follow up on concerns shared with specialist professionals. Leaders work with a large number of local authorities and organise this work skilfully.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The teaching in the school typically ensures that pupils make good progress across a wide range of subjects. Teachers support the individual needs of pupils well, even when these are complex and multidimensional.
- Recent improvements in the way that teachers assess pupils' progress in their personal development is contributing well to pupils' progress in this area too.
- Teaching staff use resources, equipment and activities well to provide interesting and accessible starting points for pupils' learning. Leaders provide effective training which is improving teachers' knowledge and skills. As a result, activities in lessons more closely match the needs and abilities of the wide range of starting points of pupils in most classes.
- Most pupils require additional support and there are a large number of additional adults in classrooms. Teachers have become more skilful in managing the work of additional adults after this was identified as a priority for improvement. As a result, pupils are becoming less dependent on these additional adults.
- Teachers are making good use of the improved systems for assessing pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics. The most able pupils can explain their reading preferences. Younger and less able pupils benefit from accurate and effective teaching of phonics and early reading skills.
- Teachers use equipment and technology well to help pupils understand and communicate their thinking when learning new ideas in mathematics.
- The recent work undertaken to improve collaboration between therapeutic staff and

teachers is benefiting pupils' progress in writing. For example, activities aimed at building pupils' stamina and physical development are having a positive impact on their progress.

- Teaching staff are well trained and skilled at supporting pupils with complex needs who have difficulty managing their own behaviour.
- Teachers are implementing the revised curriculum effectively. However, leaders recognise that teachers' use of assessment to support progress across the whole range of subjects taught is still a priority for development. Some teachers provide challenging opportunities for the most able to record and use outcomes of investigations in science lessons. However, there remains some variability in how well teachers challenge the most able across the whole school.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils of all abilities and those with complex needs make sustained progress in their personal development. A revised system for checking small steps in pupils' personal development has recently been introduced. This is beginning to allow teaching staff to decide how to support pupils even more skilfully.
- Pupils who spoke to the inspector demonstrated confidence and charisma when explaining how the school helps them discover their talents and develop their sense of identity. Girls at the school are provided with effective support in aspects of personal development particular to them. Pupils with a wide range of needs make important contributions to the life of the school.
- Pupils learn to take more responsibility for their own safety, including when using the internet, as they grow more independent. However, leaders ensure that pupils whose needs mean they are less capable of making their own decisions about personal safety are well protected.
- The school provides good guidance to help pupils understand and have respect for characteristics of people protected by law. Teachers ensure that time and the necessary support is given to help pupils discuss the importance of mutual respect.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Most pupils rapidly improve their ability to behave well and safely when they join the school.
- Leaders set ambitious targets and timescales to challenge pupils to improve their behaviour. They ensure that teaching staff have the skills necessary to manage challenging behaviour. As a result, pupils are good at ignoring disruptive or distracting behaviour in lessons and are given recognition for positive contributions to lessons.
- Leaders keep detailed records of poor behaviour and use these effectively to help decide how to make improvements. When instances of discriminatory behaviour have occasionally increased, leaders have ensured that these have rapidly declined and thoroughly explored the reasons for them.

- Pupils who spoke to inspectors were keen to underline how important it is to warmly welcome new pupils. They feel that the school is a place where they typically feel safe from bullying.
- The school's records show that leaders have sustained improvements in pupils' attendance over the last three years. However, leaders recognise that they must continue to focus on further improving the attendance of some pupils whose needs and circumstances present significant challenges.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils join the school with a very wide range of starting points. Some pupils have very low abilities in speech and communication. From these varied starting points, the school's information, and evidence seen on inspection, indicates that pupils typically make good progress along each of the three curriculum pathways.
- In English and mathematics, pupils benefit from lessons and activities which are well adapted to their various and often complex needs. As a result, most pupils make good progress over time. However, the impact of recent improvements made to the way pupils' progress is assessed across the curriculum is not yet fully established.
- Pupils make rapid strides in their personal development as a result of tailored guidance and strong communication with parents.
- The most able pupils make good progress in English and mathematics. During the inspection some of these pupils were able to demonstrate effective skills in applying mathematical concepts in science and explaining their reading preferences.
- In other subjects, pupils' achievement, including that of the most able, is more variable. Leaders' work to develop the curriculum and strengthen leadership of subjects is wisely aimed at improving this. There were signs during the inspection that this is already having a positive impact. For example, during a music lesson seen, some pupils were gaining confidence in sustaining a samba rhythm using percussion instruments.

Early years provision

Good

- There were only two children in the early years at the time of the inspection and two in the previous school year. Children join the early years with starting points which are much lower than those which are typical for their age. They make good progress because teaching staff work well with parents and other professionals to provide a high level of effective support to meet children's needs.
- Leaders have ensured that all of the independent school standards are met in the early years. The lead teacher has ensured that effective partnerships with specialist professionals such as speech and language therapists are leading to effective support for children who all have SEN and/or disabilities.
- Teaching in the early years is good. Teaching staff know children well. With the help of the 'curriculum access team' teachers use assessment information effectively to help children make progress in their emerging skills in English and mathematics.
- Teachers and additional adults provide strong support and supervision to encourage

children to learn to share and cooperate, even when they are at a very early stage in their personal and social development.

- The statutory requirements for the early years are met and safeguarding is effective. Children enjoy learning in a safe environment which is well adapted to their individual needs. Supervision is extensive and vigilant.

School details

Unique reference number	134594
DfE registration number	315/6081
Inspection number	10038170

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, 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	Day special school for pupils with autistic spectrum disorder
School category	Independent special school
Age range of pupils	4 to 12
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	58
Number of part-time pupils	None
Proprietor	Eagle House (Mitcham) Ltd
Chair	Paul Conrathe
Headteacher	Katherine Walker
Annual fees (day pupils)	£50,453
Telephone number	020 8687 7050
Website	www.eaglehousegroup.co.uk
Email address	Mitcham@eaglehousegroup.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	18–20 November 2014

Information about this school

- Eagle House School is a small independent day school in the London borough of Merton.
- It caters for pupils whose primary needs are related to their autistic spectrum disorder. Pupils live in a wide range of local authorities.
- Many pupils also experience social, emotional and mental health difficulties. All have education, health and care plans. Most pupils are boys.
- At the time of the inspection, two children were attending the early years, both full time.

- The school does not use any additional off-site provision.
- The school's previous full inspection was in November 2014. At this time, the school was judged to provide a good standard of education.

Information about this inspection

- This full standard inspection took place with one day's notice.
- The inspector conducted a range of observations in most classes alongside senior leaders. He met with a group of pupils and held a discussion with staff.
- The inspector scrutinised the school's information about pupils' progress, their attendance and behaviour.
- The inspector met with the proprietor and the premises manager. Other discussions were held with an independent consultant who supports the school and other staff responsible for safeguarding.
- The inspector considered 14 responses to Parent View and 22 staff survey responses.
- The inspector reviewed a number of documents, including school policies, logs, staff training records, and those related to safeguarding.
- The inspector also toured the premises in order to gather evidence in relation to the independent school standards.

Inspection team

Andrew Wright, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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