

Eagle House School Sutton

95 Brighton Road, Sutton, Surrey, SM2 5SJ

Inspection dates

10–12 September 2013

Overall effectiveness	Good	2
Pupils' achievement	Good	2
Pupils' behaviour and personal development	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Quality of curriculum	Adequate	3
Pupils' welfare, health and safety	Good	2
Leadership and management	Good	2

Summary of key findings

This school is good because

- The senior leaders have managed change very effectively and successfully improved teaching to raise students' achievement. They know exactly how to move the school forward.
- Students achieve well and make good progress because of consistently good teaching and much improved systems to assess their learning and personal development and to track their progress.
- Students make good progress in their personal development and behaviour, which are good overall owing to very effective pastoral and therapeutic care.
- The provision for students' welfare, health and safety is good because it is supported by extensive training and all the regulations for independent schools are met.
- Parents are delighted with the school.

It is not yet outstanding because

- The curriculum is adequate in supporting students' achievement and personal development because much of it is new and developing.
- The proportion of outstanding teaching is insufficiently high to enable students to make outstanding progress.
- The curriculum for literacy, numeracy and science is not sufficiently well coordinated throughout the school to ensure that all students can make rapid progress in all areas of these subjects.
- The monitoring of some aspects of welfare, health and safety is not consistently rigorous.

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 undertaken with one day's notice. Twelve lessons were observed, all of them jointly with the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, staff members and students.
- The inspector took account of 28 responses to staff questionnaires. There were insufficient responses to the Parent View online questionnaire to gather parents' and carers' views, but the inspector met 16 parents/carers to listen to their views.
- Written evidence was examined, including: students' work; data on progress in academic learning and behaviour and personal development; individual educational plans and other planning documentation; and attendance records.

Inspection team

Michèle Messaoudi, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

■ Information about this school

- Eagle House School is situated in the London Borough of Sutton, in South London. It provides places for students aged between 11 and 19 years who have special educational needs associated with an autistic spectrum disorder (ASD).
- The school opened in February 2009 and had its first inspection in March 2010, at which time it occupied the annexe of Stowford College, an independent school also owned by the proprietors. It took over the premises of the entire college site when the latter closed in July 2010, which enabled it to extend its provision. The school also uses local facilities for swimming, horse riding, badminton, handball, basketball and trampolining.
- Since the last inspection, there have been significant changes in the student population. The school admitted former Stowford College students who had mild or moderate learning difficulties as opposed to complex needs. Most of these students have now moved through the school and left.
- There are currently 68 students on roll aged between 12 and 19 years, six of whom are girls. There are 16 students over the age of 16 years. All students have a statement of special educational needs with the primary need of ASD. Some have complex, additional needs in association with their autism and present challenging behaviours. Students are referred and funded by 11 local authorities. Students have diverse heritages and cultural backgrounds.
- The school has a large number of staff, whose cultural diversity mirrors that of the students.
- There have been many changes in the senior leadership and staff since the last inspection. The headteacher has been in post since 2 September 2013 and the deputy headteacher since September 2012. A clinical psychologist has been employed, who leads the therapeutic team. In the last 12 months, the school has been led by an interim leadership team comprising a wide range of experts. This team remains part of the senior leadership.
- The school aims to prepare its young people for life beyond school through 'unlocking full potential by striving to create a school day that is motivating, rewarding and purposeful for each individual'.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching so that students can make outstanding progress by:
 - ensuring that teachers always give students tasks that match their needs and abilities precisely
 - consistently involving students in the assessment of their learning in lessons
 - improving the effectiveness of learning support assistants in lessons by developing their skills in supporting students' learning
 - making arrangements for moderating teachers' assessments more systematically.
- Further develop what is new in the curriculum and monitor its impact on students' learning and personal development closely to ensure that the needs of all are served well.
- Strengthen the leadership by:
 - ensuring the implementation of all welfare, health and safety policies are monitored rigorously
 - developing the skills of subject leaders to share the responsibilities of monitoring the quality of the curriculum and teaching to enable all students to make rapid progress, particularly in literacy, numeracy and science.

Inspection judgements

Pupils' achievement

Good

Achievement is good. Most students have had negative experiences of schooling prior to joining Eagle House and some have been out of education for long periods. Most have gaps in their knowledge and join with levels that are below expectations for their age, or very low. Taking into account their varying starting points, most students make good, and some make outstanding, progress against their individual targets across subjects. This success owes much to the combined impact of consistently good teaching, excellent therapeutic and pastoral care and to aspects of the developing curriculum. As noted by parents and carers, students settle quickly, improve their behaviour significantly and are eager to learn. Students make good progress in their communication and social skills as a result of regular provision for speech and language and occupational therapy, close liaison between the therapeutic and teaching staff and detailed tracking of their progress in these areas. Achievement is not outstanding because there are pockets of uneven progress in literacy, numeracy and science. The school has already taken steps to address this issue.

In all lessons, students are consistently engaged in discussion through targeted questioning, which develops their speaking and listening skills well and supports their writing skills very effectively. Non-verbal communicators make good progress in using a range of communication methods to supplement or replace speech or writing and, owing to very effective support from the therapeutic team, they participate fully in lessons. In most classes, students often make links between subjects in lessons, which enable them to apply basic skills in a wide range of contexts. While the less able students make excellent progress in their reading skills, the more able make slower progress in reading. Students achieve well in information and communication technology (ICT) and the more able achieved highly in the OCR National examination in ICT. All students who have completed their education at the school have gained a range of accredited qualifications and moved on to further education.

Pupils' behaviour and personal development

Good

While students' behaviour and personal development are good overall, their behaviour is exemplary in and out of lessons. Recent improvements in the curriculum have not had time to have an impact on their personal development and this is why it is not yet outstanding. Students speak enthusiastically about what they learn and parents and carers report that their children talk often and positively about school at home. Students' enjoyment is reflected in high levels of participation in lessons. The attendance of most students is good. The poor attendance of a small minority improves over time. A calm atmosphere pervades the school and lessons generally proceed without disruption, enabling students to achieve well. Staff teach students how to manage their anger and frustrations, develop self-control and be aware of others' needs. Because they know students very well and work as a cohesive team, they can often pre-empt outbursts and successfully use de-escalation techniques to defuse a potentially volatile situation. When an outburst does occur, staff response is very swift and extremely well coordinated, resulting in minimal disruption. The provision of nurture groups has a positive impact on Key Stage 3 students who present challenging behaviours and complex needs. They stay in class, keep on task and so achieve better. Students know what constitutes bullying, and bullying and racial incidents are rare. They learn how to keep safe when using the internet, swimming, crossing the road or interacting with the wider community.

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Weekly assemblies and daily lessons provide regular opportunities for self-reflection. Students have a keen sense of right and wrong and follow school rules. They develop high levels of self-confidence and most converse readily with visitors. They are welcoming, friendly and respectful. They form harmonious relationships with peers and staff of diverse backgrounds. They often show great kindness and

patience to each other. Students readily join clubs where they develop their numerical, technological, physical, creative, social and life skills. The specific needs of girls are met well through a girls' club. Students are given some opportunities to excel, which raises their self-esteem and boosts their achievement. For example, some Key Stage 3 students won the first prize in a national competition for which they made a film on cyber bullying. Students contribute to improving school life and actively learn to be responsible citizens through the work of the school council. However, the remit of the school council is too limited to contribute more than adequately to students' personal development. Students' cultural development is fostered well through the curriculum and educational visits. For example, students learn to appreciate and respect others' beliefs by visiting places of worship. However, the diversity of students, parents/carers and staff is under used as a prime resource. Students develop a good awareness of public institutions and the local community through regular visits to local facilities such as shops, parks, museums, libraries and theatres. The school has ensured that where political issues are explored, views are presented in a balanced way.

Quality of teaching

Good

Teaching is consistently good and enables students to achieve well. It is not outstanding because the growing proportion of outstanding lessons is not yet sufficiently high to support outstanding achievement. Also, the moderation of teachers' assessments is not systematic. As a result of intensive training, coaching and mentoring, teachers have significantly improved their skills and share a common understanding of good practice. Teaching is underpinned by high expectations of what each student can achieve, good understanding of students' individual attainment, needs and aptitudes and good subject knowledge. Teachers skilfully question students and continuously check on their learning, reshaping tasks to ensure that they learn well. The teaching and therapeutic teams work very effectively together to ensure that individual students are supported well in respect of their sensory, communication, behaviour and autism needs. Consequently, students enjoy learning and make good progress in lessons that are planned well to sustain their interest and tasks that mostly match their needs closely. Occasionally, work is not fully matched to individual needs. Their independence is developed well.

Where the teaching is outstanding, the teacher uses information from assessments extremely effectively to provide individual students with tasks that match their needs exactly and give them constructive and detailed feedback on how well they are learning. Consequently, students are able to progress rapidly. However, the practice of involving students in the assessment of their learning is not consistent throughout the school. In some potentially outstanding lessons, what prevents students from making excellent progress is that not all teaching assistants are sufficiently proactive or skilled to support and challenge them consistently. Consequently, students only make good progress.

Improved assessment procedures give staff a reliable and accurate picture of students' progress. Teachers' assessments are moderated to ensure consistency and accuracy, but not both internally and externally throughout the school. The senior leaders have clear plans to address this issue. Improved analysis of the information from assessments enables the leaders to identify the small proportion of students not making as much progress as they could and to take prompt action to help these students catch up.

Quality of curriculum

Adequate

The curriculum is adequate, rather than good, despite some strong features, because it has recently been reviewed and partly remodelled to better serve the changing needs of students. It is still developing and these changes have not yet been evaluated. In each key stage, the curriculum is broad and balanced, covers all the required areas of learning and meets the requirements of students' statements. It enables students to achieve well overall. There is a strong emphasis on developing students' literacy, numeracy and communication skills. The provision for physical

education (PE) benefits from much improved resources. Music is taught in a therapeutic context and has a great impact on students' well-being. The curriculum is taught by specialists in some subjects. Where the planning of the curriculum has been thoroughly reviewed, it now supports the teaching well and provides appropriate challenge for students. Elsewhere it is adequate and under review. The curriculum for literacy, numeracy and science is insufficiently well coordinated, resulting in a minority of students making adequate, rather than good, progress in some areas of these subjects. Subject leaders have been appointed but their role is not yet developed. Individual educational plans are much improved and support the therapeutic and teaching teams very effectively in monitoring students' progress in areas related to their autism.

In Key Stage 3, the National Curriculum has been suitably adapted and is taught through a thematic approach in the Steps department where links between subject areas are planned well to make students' learning more coherent. In the Bridge department, for higher-level communicators, the positive impact of the creation of a nurture group on Key Stage 3 students' achievement has led to the provision of a second one. The Key Stage 4 curriculum has widened to include work-related pathways that serve the current students better than what was on offer previously. Where appropriate, Key Stage 4 students work towards Entry Level functional skills in mathematics and English and Entry Level science. BTECs, OCR National qualifications and GCSE options are available through links with local colleges. The post-16 curriculum now offers a wider range of vocational courses through links with a local college, as well as the Edexcel Personal Progress programme and a more life skills-based pathway built around the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) Towards Independence programme.

Personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) has been recently reviewed to meet a wide range of needs more closely and contributes effectively to students' personal development. Careers education is developing and prepares students adequately for their future. The school recognises that it does not fully utilise its community links to ensure that all students benefit from their placement. The contribution of an annual residential visit to developing students' independence, social, leadership and team work skills is a strength of PSHCE. Opportunities for developing students' enterprise, literacy and numeracy skills are not fully exploited. The curriculum is enriched well by a wide range of educational visits and clubs that contribute well to their cultural and social development.

Pupils' welfare, health and safety

Good

The provision for students' welfare, health and safety is good. Its strongest feature is the excellent day-to-day care provided for students, underpinned by very high levels of commitment to their welfare and well-being and supported by extensive training. It is not outstanding because, although all the regulations for independent schools are met, the school recognises that the monitoring of the implementation of policies is not consistently rigorous. Robust recruitment procedures ensure that all adults working with children are properly vetted. All the required checks are carefully recorded in a single central register. The staff receive training in child protection at the appropriate levels and intervals and, out of the three senior leaders trained as designated persons for child protection, two have current training. The safeguarding policy is sufficiently detailed to support staff in this work. The school can demonstrate that it follows the correct procedures when dealing with concerns.

Students feel safe because the staff provide a very caring, supportive and inclusive environment in which they can make friends and learn. They and their parents and carers particularly appreciate the school's ability to manage behaviour very effectively and positively. The school can demonstrate that behaviour incidents reduce greatly and rapidly after a student joins the school owing to improved behaviour management systems informed by in-depth psychological analysis of behaviour patterns. Students trust the adults to deal swiftly and effectively with the few instances of bullying there are. The recent introduction of an online system to log and analyse behaviour incidents greatly facilitates the tracking of students' behaviour and supports pastoral teams

extremely well. Accidents are meticulously recorded and the occurrence of few serious ones reflects very good supervision and students' awareness of how to keep safe. Risk assessments of the premises, on-site and off-site visits and individual students are thorough. All the regulatory fire safety checks are carried out at appropriate intervals. Students are encouraged to keep healthy through PSHCE, PE and sports activities including swimming and horse riding. Admission and attendance registers are maintained properly and attendance is monitored effectively.

Leadership and management

Good

Leadership and management are good and enable students to achieve well. They are not outstanding because they have not yet secured the highest levels of achievement for all students, the curriculum is adequate and the monitoring of some aspects of welfare, health and safety is not consistently rigorous. The proprietor ensures that students are properly safeguarded and all regulations for independent schools are met. Robust action was taken when facing enormous challenges following amalgamation between the two schools that reflected in a temporary dip in students' achievement. The proprietor appointed an interim leadership team of experts that accurately evaluated the priorities for improvement and focused relentlessly on improving the quality of teaching. Teaching is good and improving, resulting in good achievement. The appointment of a clinical psychologist to lead the therapeutic team has contributed greatly to students' outstanding behaviour, good academic achievement and good personal development. All adults actively foster a nurturing and enabling ethos. The leadership responded swiftly to the evolving needs of the changing student population by remodelling the curriculum. However, systems are not yet fully in place to monitor the curriculum closely and check that all students are enabled to make rapid progress in all subject areas.

Management plans show that senior leaders know exactly what to do to further improve the school. The new headteacher is supported extremely well by the interim leadership team, which ensures that rapid improvement can be sustained. She and the deputy headteacher demonstrate a thorough understanding of the quality of teaching and its impact on individual students' achievement. The staff are strongly motivated by the senior leaders' good capacity for securing sustainable improvement and share their high expectations and ambition. Most feel well supported in their professional development. Strong commitment to staff development has resulted in staff retention. The proprietor is involved in self-evaluation and supports and challenges the senior leaders very effectively. Extensive refurbishment of the premises and improved resources provide very effective teaching accommodation. Parents and carers are very positive about all aspects of the school's work. They and the placing authorities receive the full range of required information. Complaints procedures are clear and meet requirements, and concerns are properly addressed.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	A school which provides an exceptional quality of education and significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 2	Good	A school which provides a high quality of education that exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 3	Adequate	A school which meets minimum requirements but needs to improve the quality of education it provides.
Grade 4	Inadequate	A school where minimum requirements are not met and/or the quality of education has serious weaknesses.

School details

Unique reference number	135801
Inspection number	420201
DfE registration number	319/6074

This inspection was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended 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	Day special school for pupils with autism spectrum disorder (ASD)
School status	Independent School
Age range of pupils	11–19 years
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	68
Proprietor	Paul Conrathe (Eagle House Group Ltd)
Headteacher	Annabel Faulkner
Date of previous school inspection	March 2010
Annual fees (day pupils)	£36,281–£49,855
Telephone number	020 8661 1419
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