

Inspection of Eagle House School

224 London Road, Mitcham, Surrey CR4 3HD

Inspection dates: 6–8 November 2019

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Good

Does the school meet the independent school standards? **Yes**

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders and staff have created a nurturing environment. They help pupils to learn, play and discover in a safe place. Pupils are kind to each other.

They respect the fact that everyone is different, but all can be included somehow. Pupils learn how to look after themselves and be kind and tolerant to others. Every morning, pupils share how they are feeling. Staff can quickly then decide how best to support them. New arrivals to the school settle quickly. Staff assess their needs prior to them starting. They are welcomed with genuine warmth.

Staff want pupils to know that they have a voice and that they are cared for. They plan activities that enthuse and motivate pupils. During the inspection, pupils enjoyed visiting the incubator, to watch the newborn chicks. The school is well resourced. A swing room, soft-play area and outside apparatus all add to the physical fun of the day.

Leaders and staff want pupils to be prepared for the wider world. Pupils are taught skills that will help them to become more independent. Older pupils apply for roles within the school such as the librarian or shopping coordinator. Younger pupils learn how to take care of themselves.

Staff are adept at managing pupils' behaviour. They are calm and caring. They know pupils well and quickly de-escalate situations using a range of strategies. Any quarrels are dealt with swiftly. High staff ratios mean that pupils can find quiet and solace in a one-to-one situation. Bullying of any kind is not tolerated. Staff quickly intercede should anyone be deliberately unkind.

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

The proprietor, leaders, directors and staff want all pupils to have the best quality life, both now and in the future. This vision is at the heart of the school. Leaders are experienced and knowledgeable. They know how to get the best out of pupils with autism. Pupils are assessed before they start and during the first few weeks. This ensures that each pupil has a bespoke plan. Leaders have developed a 'curriculum access team' (CAT). This includes behaviour specialists, therapists, psychologists and speech and language professionals. The CAT team works closely with teachers and learning support assistants (LSAs). Together, they offer wraparound support to enable pupils to make good progress. The broad curriculum aims to help pupils make sense of the world around them. All pupils practise their mathematics, reading and writing skills daily. This helps them as they study the broad range of other subjects. Pupils learn how to communicate their feelings and ideas. They learn how to cope in a range of situations.

Pupils across the school have a diet rich in stories, songs and rhymes. This helps as they start to learn sounds, blend them into words and read books. Pupils enjoy listening as teachers read aloud, immersing themselves in the story. Teachers are

increasingly confident in teaching pupils to read.

Leaders and staff prepare pupils for the wider world. They encourage pupils to learn skills that will help them to become more independent. Older pupils apply for roles within the school such as the librarian or shopping coordinator. Younger pupils learn how to take care of themselves. All practise their speaking, listening and communication skills throughout the day.

Pupils are enthusiastic about the many clubs and activities they do during the day. They learn how to swim at a local pool and practise cycling in the school grounds. Some pupils run groups, such as Lego club and Eco club. Others enjoy the popular train club or contribute to the school council. Leaders are mindful that girls are a minority group. Consequently, they have their own weekly girls' group. Trips to the shops to buy ingredients for cooking support pupils' social skills. Music and art feature highly during each day's planned activities.

Leaders are increasingly mindful of staff workload. They have recently collected staff's views and have created a 'well-being' group. The school is highly staffed with experienced practitioners. All staff build trusting and positive relationships with the pupils in their care. However, some teachers do not utilise support staff as well as they could. Some LSAs only support pupils' behavioural and emotional development, whereas others are deployed to actively support pupils' learning.

Leaders have identified that younger children, particularly those in the early years, would benefit from more sensory, creative and tactile activities. This area of the school lacks the careful attention to detail seen elsewhere. Activities are often disparate. Adults do not do enough to help children play or explore. They do not capture children's interest or if they do, they do not build on it. Valuable learning time is lost.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All staff are clear about their responsibility to keep pupils safe and be vigilant. The safeguarding team ensures that staff training is up-to-date and relevant to the needs of the pupils. They know families well. They can anticipate when further help is needed. Leaders work closely within the group of schools and more widely, to seek appropriate help as required. The site is very well maintained and secure. Leaders keep careful records of referrals to external agencies and check carefully that agreed actions have been completed.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- Not all teachers successfully deploy LSAs to support pupils' learning. Leaders must enable teachers to utilise all LSAs so that they can contribute fully to pupils' learning.
- The curriculum in the early years is not as well planned as in the rest of the school. Leaders must review how they manage and deliver the early years foundation stage.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you're not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

School details

Unique reference number	134594
DfE registration number	315/6081
Local authority	Merton
Inspection number	10119990
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	4 to 12
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	62
Proprietor	Paul Conrathe
Chief Executive Officer	Julia Pithouse
Headteacher	Katherine Walker
Annual fees (day pupils)	£52,727
Telephone number	0208 687 7050
Website	www.eaglehouseschool.co.uk
Email address	Mitcham@eaglehousegroup.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	14–16 November 2017

Information about this school

- Eagle House School is an independent special day school, opened in 2004.
- The school provides education for pupils with autistic spectrum disorders and associated difficulties.
- When it was last inspected in November 2017, it was judged to be good.
- The school does not use alternative providers.
- Eagle House School is part of the Eagle House Group. There are four schools within the group.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- There were too few pupils in the early years to make a judgement about this aspect of the provision without the risk of identifying individual children.
- We considered the quality of education provided by the school. We undertook 'deep dives' into early reading, science, mathematics and personal, social and health education. This included visits to lessons, discussions with curriculum leaders, teachers and pupils, and looking at pupils' work.
- We spoke with the proprietor, school directors, the CEO, school leaders, staff and the designated safeguarding lead.
- We reviewed safeguarding records, policies and procedures. We checked the school's procedures for ensuring the safe recruitment of staff.
- We took account of the three responses to Ofsted's online Parent View. We considered the 50 responses to the staff survey. Three pupils completed a school produced survey.
- We scrutinised a wide range of documentation including: records relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance, minutes of meetings, the school's self-evaluation documentation and the school development plan. We looked at records relating to pupils who have joined or left the school. No pupils left during the last academic year.
- We observed the start and end of the day arrangements. We spoke with children, pupils and staff. I attended an assembly.
- We checked the premises to ensure that they met the independent school standards.

Inspection team

Helen Matthews, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Angela Corbett

Ofsted Inspector

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